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POETRY AND ITS FORMS

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POETRY
AND ITS
FORMS

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE COLLEGE



G · P · PUTNAM'S SONS

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PREFACE

Poetry and Its Forms undertakes to set forth those general aspects of poetry which are necessary to an intelligent and a sympathetic appreciation of poetry as an art. The book is designed to guide the student into such an interpretation of poetry as will aid him not only in formulating sound critical standards of judgment but also in bringing about an enrichment of his own experiences as a human being. Accordingly, historical and technical information is furnished as well as appreciative evaluations. The mood of the entire book has as its objective a stimulation of the reader's feeling and imagination and an awakening within him of a desire to read poetry after the personality of the teacher has been withdrawn. Because of this fact, poetry itself is stressed rather than the men who wrote it or the times in which they wrote: emphasis is placed upon poetry as a thing to be enjoyed for what it says and the way it says it.

As a basis for study, the arrangement by types or forms has been selected. Unlike those texts which follow the plan of an historical survey, this book is concerned mostly with the thought and structure of poetry rather than with sources, developments, influences, and periods. Admirable as other methods of study may be, the study by forms demands our special consideration. More than some other textual arrangements and devices, it holds itself more faithfully to a consideration of poetry as an art. The stress, in this instance, is more likely to be laid upon how the thing is done and what is said. The student is reminded constantly of a poem as a part of universal experience rather than as a mouthpiece of a certain school of a given epoch. Where the consideration of classes of poetry does not overshadow the poetry itself, arrangement by forms injects a unifying element into a course in poetry which is both pleasant and fruitful. The study of forms is not therefore an end in itself, but rather a means to a far nobler end, namely that of making poetry infectious.

The author of this book is aware of the difficulty of classifying certain poems. He does not for a moment assume that his disposition of certain examples is the only one. Every student of poetry knows that many poems admit of several classifications. In such instances the author was guided by their dominant features, and classified them accordingly.

In so far as it was possible, the discussion of each form follows a similar plan. A brief history of the form is first given, then the general characteristics of the form. Some outstanding examples are next discussed, with regard both to their typical features and to their appeal as pieces of literary art and mirrors of experience. Exercises are provided to suggest topics for written reports or subjects for class discussions. These exercises are also designed to extend the student's knowledge of the given subject, and to direct him in applying still more widely the principles which were developed in the course of the chapter. Questions involving exhaustive research or elaborate inquiry into the minutiae of technique are avoided. At the close of each chapter examples from English and American literatures are listed. The author sought to select examples that had intrinsic merit, that represented variations within the type itself, that were most interesting and most beneficial to the student, that were most likely to be listed in leading anthologies, and that were representative of the whole field of English and American literatures.

Poetry and Its Forms may be used in various ways. Obviously, its primary function is most happily realized where the types of poetry are made the basis of study. It should be noted, however, that this text also lends itself admirably to use as an auxiliary volume in the ordinary historical or chronological survey course. For example, when *Beowulf* or *Paradise Lost* is assigned for reading, Chapter V—the Epic—might be studied profitably in conjunction with such an assignment. When *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight* is given for study, Chapter VI—the Romance—could advantageously also be assigned. In addition to the use of this text in the classroom, this book would prove helpful in private study. There are countless people who desire a better acquaintance with poetry, but who are denied the privilege of classroom guidance. To this group, such a book would further unlock the treasure-house of poetry, and more intimately bring them into contact with its friendliness and its untold richness.

It is suggested that some good anthology be used with *Poetry and Its Forms*. The latter could be studied outside of class, enabling the teacher to devote the valuable time of the classroom periods to discussions of certain questions that appear in the exercises and for the interpretation of the poems themselves.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness, first of all, to the students upon whom many portions of this book were tried. To Professor William E. Werner of The Pennsylvania State College the author owes a special debt of gratitude for having read the entire manuscript before it went to press. The results of his accurate and profound scholarship are reflected at numerous places throughout the book.

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William Ellery Leonard's two sonnets from *Two Lives*:

"I found a paper on her chiffonier"

"An instant—leapt—leapt—followed. In the hall"

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POETRY AND ITS FORMS

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THE PROVINCE OF POETRY

POETRY is a very old art. Just when and by whom the first poems were produced we shall never know; but almost as far back as record and tradition carry us into human history, we find something of the nature of poetry. Somewhere in that indistinct past, before writing was known and before the sciences had revealed their secrets, man felt the need of giving expression to the yearnings of his inner consciousness. The forces of nature were about him. Often these seemed hostile to his best interests. Drought, storm, and cold repeatedly made life very miserable. Naturally he sought in some way to restrain the powers that controlled these destructive agencies. At first his oral attempts in this direction must have been brief and very crude; but as time went on he improved, and eventually was enabled to express his petitions in a rather definite manner. Let us take a specific instance. Among the early settlers on the Island of Great Britain were the Anglo-Saxons. Unable to cope with the various misfortunes of life in a scientific manner, as we very largely do today, these medieval people resorted to charms. If bees swarmed, for example, they would take earth, throw it up with their right hand from under their right foot, and say:

I take under foot, I have found it.
Verily earth avails against every creature,
And against mischief and mindlessness,
And against the great tongue of man.

Then throwing dust over the swarming bees, they would say:

Sit ye, victor-dames, sink to earth,
Never fly wild to the wood!
Be as mindful of my good
As every man is of his food and estate.

(translation by Albert S. Cook and Chauncey
B. Tinker)

Life, for these early peoples, was harder and more perplexing than it is for us today. When any one of their number got a sharp pain in the side, his friends did not go to the medicine cabinet; instead, if they happened to know the charm, they took three plants, feverfew, red nettle, and plantain, and after seething them in butter, would chant over the patient a number of verse-like lines. The last thirteen run thus:

Six smiths sat, war-spears they wrought,
Out, spear, not in, spear!
If herein there be a bit of iron,
The work of witches, it shall melt!
If thou wert shot in the skin, or wert shot in the flesh,
Or wert shot in the blood,
Or wert shot in the limb, never may thy life be harmed!
If it were a shot of gods, or if it were a shot of elves,
Or if it were a shot of witches, now will I help thee.
This to thee as a remedy for the shot of gods, this to thee
as a remedy for the shot of elves,
This to thee as a remedy for the shot of witches; I will help thee.
Flee to the mountain-head!
Be thou whole, the Lord help thee!
(translation by Albert S. Cook and Chauncey B. Tinker)

Instead of calling in a doctor for a sick child, they uttered a charm by way of befriending or frightening the evil spirit who supposedly hovered about the child. Before going to war, they petitioned the gods for aid. Frequently, while the opposing armies faced each other on the battlefield, just before the beginning of the conflict, they hurled taunts back and forth, much in the same manner as rival college groups now give a series of cheers, preparatory to an athletic contest. We find innumerable remnants of this ancient practice in literary history: for instance, in the wars between the Israelites and the Philistines, between the Trojans and the Greeks before the walls of Troy, and between Dowglas and Perssy in the Battle of Otterburn.

In the absence of the various sciences, early tribes were thorough believers in superstition. Everything that happened carried with it some peculiar signification. We need but turn to our own century for instances of these versified superstitions. Among the Pennsylvania Germans numerous examples have been collected

by Edwin Miller Fogel and others. Two taken from Mr. Fogel's collection read as follows:

Sing fer sibe un
Du heilscht fer elfe.

(Sing before seven
Cry before eleven)

Nasser Abril' un kiler Moi
Fillt keller un scheier und bringt fil hoi.

(A wet April and cool May
Fills cellar and barn and brings much hay.)

The chants accompanying Indian war dances and the songs that later directed the "Play-Party" games in various sections of the United States are other evidences of the important part that poetry played in the lives of the early folk. In England the following was used centuries ago as a harvest-song:

Oats and beans and barley grow!
Oats and beans and barley grow!
Do you or I or anyone know
How oats and beans and barley grow?
First the farmer sows his seed,
Then he stands and takes his ease,
Stamps his foot, and claps his hands,
Then turns round to view the land
Waiting for a partner, waiting for a partner!
Open the ring and take one in.

(from Mrs. Gomme's Dictionary of British Folklore)

The last two lines suggest its later use as a circle-form song.

These various chants, charms, and superstitions were first expressed in rhythmic form. With time they became more beautifully phrased, until, later on, the many devices of alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and refrain were drawn upon to enrich the simple melody, which was all the primitive people had known. Artificial devices such as these stimulated the memory and made possible the retention of large portions of versified materials. Poetry thus was a means to an end. It helped people to be happy and courageous; it alleviated pain and beguiled mis-

fortune. Poetry, at first, was accordingly much closer to every-day life than it now is.

As poetry improved in beauty, it likewise increased in power. The hearers became inspired and intoxicated with its cadence and its story. They delighted in the magic of its words and phrases. Very soon poetry was regarded not only as a source of help in difficulties and misfortunes, but as a thing of enjoyment. With a more beautiful poetry came more intricate rules for its composition. This changing status brought into prominence the persons who were most skilled in forming poetry. So important did these makers of poetry become that kings and noblemen added them to their retinues merely in order to provide entertainment at stated intervals. Instances are on record in Ireland, England, and Norway where the poet was next to the king in power. The poet laureateship of England is a remnant of this ancient custom.

We see then that ever since the time that poetry made its first appearance, it has continued to captivate the human mind and heart. *Poetry* has come to be a household word, familiar alike to student and laborer; yet it is never trite. Poetry is all about us, yet never commonplace.

Attention should of course be called to the fact that, side by side with the improvement in poetry, appeared also the tendency toward rigidity and artificiality. Its elevation to power attracted many mere rhymesters, who, lacking the capacity and genuine poetic fire, made of poetry a mere clever exercise, only remotely related to the affairs of men.

If we think of poetry as we know it today—in its more artistic aspects—we might go back to the early Greek epics as a convenient starting point, to *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, written presumably by Homer about the ninth century B.C. There are other names that likewise appear in the dawn of Oriental and European poetry, such Hebrews as Isaiah, David, and Solomon; such notable Greeks as Hesiod, Sappho, Simonides, and Pindar; and the two Roman poets, Horace and Vergil. Some very ancient poems of Egypt, India, and China have come down to us; but they did not enter the main current of the world's poetry as we now know it.

Poetry not only developed first as a form of literature, but it has been gathering laurels all along the centuries. In addition

to those poets mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the names of such poets as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Keats, and Browning are among the greatest names in the world's literature.

Despite its age and its popularity, poetry has never been the same to any two poets or lovers of poetry, never will be the same; for the lives of no two poets or readers have ever been identical; and life is the stuff out of which poetry is made. Poetry is not a concrete object, like *tree*, *stone*, or *wood*, but a very abstract thing, similar to such ideas as *love*, *loyalty*, *patriotism*, and *friendship*. We are baffled when we try to define love and friendship. The terms which we employ in our attempt to define or describe these forces are not and cannot be exact, objectively clear, or definite. Yet, we prize a mother's love even though we cannot define or explain it. The moment it were possible to enclose the idea of love within the bounds of a definition, that moment it would cease to be love as we know it. Love, for me, is not the same as love for somebody else. This is also true of poetry. Poetry, then, shows a slightly different face to every beholder.

While no two people agree exactly as to the precise nature of poetry, definitions of poetry are not wanting; and we shall find it helpful to read some of the divergent views which poets and critics have expressed:

Poetry is the image of man and nature. Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.

—William Wordsworth

Poetry, in a general sense, may be described to be the expression of the imagination.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

Poetry, therefore, we will call musical thought.

—Thomas Carlyle

By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors.

—Thomas Babington Macaulay

Poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of the thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which causes it to exist.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I would define, in brief, the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty.

—Edgar Allan Poe

Poetry . . . a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty.

—Matthew Arnold

Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight of the human soul.

—Edmund Clarence Stedman

Poetry is the capture of a picture, a song or a flair, in a delicate prism of words.

—Carl Sandburg

POETRY AND ART

Alongside of poetry, there have arisen other forms of expression which also seek to interpret man's relationship to the world about him. We call them arts. Poetry is an art. So also are architecture, sculpture, painting, and music. Poetry has many things in common with these. Art, of whatever sort, furnishes man with a medium whereby he may give definite form to his reactions to the world about him. Art is a necessary condition of life, a means of relaying essential impressions from generation to generation—in short, a mode of intercourse. It seeks to transmit by certain sounds, forms, lines, or words those highest and best feelings which men have lived through, in such a way that the hearers or beholders may also be impressed by them and experience them.

The subject of truly great art concerns itself with those basic passions and experiences common to all people. The relationship of man to God, of man to man, and of man to the natural objects about him are all fundamental themes of art. It delves into those elemental feelings which all have, such as love, fear, hatred, joy, and pain. Art appeals to every part of man's nature: to the intellectual, emotional, and imaginative. In so far as art

concerns itself with these it is a means of union among men, a common ground upon which all may meet.

It follows that the universal subject matter of art, when it is successfully put into words at all, is presented in a form which reaches the thought and feeling of everyday people. The form which art assumes, whether employing stone, canvas, or words, should be such as to communicate clearly and intensively the idea in the mind of the artist so that the hearer or observer may share most sympathetically and happily with him that thought or feeling.

Art must, however, do something more than present a universal subject comprehensively; it must transmit its impressions in an attractive and beautiful manner. Art must be enjoyable. It leads ultimately to tranquillity by interpreting the world in more enduring terms—by showing the “relation of the beautiful to the useful”; but it is a “playground” rather than a mill; so that however engaging and essential the spiritual content of art may be, this content must be manifested in beautiful form. The criteria which determine an artist’s success are based not only upon his technical skill and his choice of a particular portion of human experience, but upon his faculty for presenting beauty. Only in so far as he does this will he succeed in revealing to others the world which his own spirit visits.

Artists have always employed various means of interpreting their world to those about them. Although the architect builds for use, he works into his building elements of beauty by observing certain geometrical proportions. He co-ordinates arch, aisle, colonnade, cupola, façade, spire, and vault into one harmonious whole in keeping with his conception of beauty. So the architect fashions into his structure something of the spiritual quality which actuated him at the time of its inception. We have the aloofness and the serenity of the Parthenon and the mysticism of Chartres Cathedral.

The art of sculpture employs stone, clay, wood, and metals. It may draw its theme from the whole range of human characters and experience. The sculptor is of course restricted to those bits of consciousness which can be reflected by “fixed facial expression, by physical type, and by attitude.” He notes the effects of the spirit upon various portions of the body so that he may know, for instance, where and how to represent joy and fear. The

sculptor reduces mankind to certain types and reproduces these in personified form. These personified generalities, however, become the mediums of presenting deep spiritual ideas.

In the art of painting, colors are employed to represent human form and the various objects of the world or of man's creation. Here, as in sculpture, the significance lies not in the form or object, but in the thought, feeling, or action which is signified. The painter can place upon his canvas a more complete story and a more involved emotion than the sculptor. Both the sculptor and the painter can present an emotion but vaguely. Much is left for our own consciousness to interpret in the light of its own experience. But this vagueness has the advantage of setting no limitation upon our feelings, and as a result we are often stirred very deeply.

Sound is the vehicle upon which the art of music conveys its feeling. Unlike sculpture and painting, music does not imitate anything. Its realm is one of pure fancy; although in order to transmit its pleasure, it must adhere to strict rules and mathematical proportions. The spirit here finds its happiest home. Music is less capable of telling a story or of communicating thoughts than sculpture or painting; but in the realm of sensuous perception it sways with a magic wand. The musician transports us to a world that is dim, yet intensely real. He deals with simple feelings, which are interpreted vaguely but immediately by the hearer. The result is the more intense because of this magical indistinctness. The musician conveys an emotion before it has been reduced to words, and thereby before it has lost much of the force which it exerts while still in the realm of the subconscious.

The art of poetry uses words, the very medium which men use in their ordinary exchange of ideas. While this fact, one might think, would entail a less intense emotional fervor than other forms of art, actually it makes for *greater intensity* when the difficult medium of words is fully mastered. The poet is able to tell a story specifically. Because of the pictorial power of words, poetry may be said to embrace all the arts. Poetry can do imaginatively with words what architecture, painting, sculpture, and music do with their more concrete mediums, and do it even more potently. With words poetry can paint a scene upon the wall of the mind, can erect a beautiful cathedral in the tissues

of the brain, and can inject the softest strain into the inner ear. To the limits of its power there is no end.

It is evident that each art employs a medium in keeping with the laws of beauty which govern that art. Each artist produces a work with the materials at hand and according to the principles by which that art operates. Whatever his field, the artist stamps the work with his own individuality. To his favorite art every artist turns everything that gives him joy or grief, and, as it were, petitions it to preserve each mood for him in some beautiful form which will last through the ages. If he works with sincerity and clarity, the thing he makes will live on; every curve, line, note, or word is imbued with lasting significance.

Since poetry is an art, we must approach it as an art. In poetry we find life, pulsating life. It is no mere mental exercise, pastime, or ornament. It is not a mere clever set of magically arranged symbols, nor an ingenious kind of entertainment or decoration. The inducements which lead people to read poetry, it is true, are many and varied. Some go to poetry for consolation and instruction. Others regard it as the fountain-head of inspiration. Some seek merely entertainment. Whatever the impelling motive for reading, the reader must remember that poetry is able to give him only what an art can give, no more and no less. It supplies no material needs, adds practically nothing to our physical comforts, and can make no claim to be a teacher of a definite doctrine. What the reader will find in it is a storehouse of ideals, the best that man has thought, the most beautiful presentation of those experiences which are common to us all as members of one common race.

POETRY AND THE POET

Behind the poem is a poet—a human being made up of spirit and body. The spirit is the occupant of a mortal body. The two are intertwined, the condition of the one affecting the other. Both leave their impress upon that which the poet writes. It must be evident why some understanding of the poet as a human being will aid materially in a better appreciation of that art which he has produced. There are certain characteristics which most poets have in common. These we ought to consider briefly.

First of all, every poet is a flesh and blood creature, with his

elements of weakness and of strength. Were he not beset, as others, with the trials that come as a result of an imperfect body, his message to mankind would lack understanding and sympathy. Since he, like all mortals, is heir to countless human pleasures and pains, his song, although it soars into heaven's blue, is still tied to earth by unbreakable cords of mutual joy and grief.

If we search diligently enough into the life of any one poet, we shall most assuredly find some unlovely pictures. Pope's dwarfed body, Byron's misshapen leg, and Keats' physical frailty have all left their peculiar impress upon the writing of these men. Is the poetry of Burns, Byron, Poe, and Shelley less desirable because certain episodes in their lives cannot be squared with the highest ethical code? Do these discoveries make the poetry of these men less helpful? Must the lives of the poets accord in every respect with what they enunciate in their poems? The fact remains that from these same personalities came superb poetry. Could a rich poetic gem be fashioned from the ore of an untried, unerring soul—by one who knew not the vicissitudes of life? By whom else can good be so highly esteemed but by those who have known the strain and toil of ordinary living? What does matter in the poet is that, despite his failures, he was following an ideal and constantly trying to realize a fuller, happier existence. The poet of true art is the striving, seeking poet.

There are certain qualities which the poet should possess. In Browning's *How It Strikes a Contemporary* the poet is described as one who peers closely into the affairs of life. Tennyson's ideal poet saw

... thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul,
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,
Before him lay ...

The power of observing the world in this manner is something that can neither be taught nor learned. The poet must be greater than his production, as a bank is greater than the note which it issues. He must be master of the technique of poetry, so that he can with sureness of touch strike those keys which will emit the desired harmony. The poet is, to a large extent, a mathe-

matical magician. He can add two and two and get five. What he gives to the world in his lines is greater and other than the sum of the component parts. The experiences which he presents, when re-created and refined in the crucible of his moving spirit, assume an aspect infinitely greater and more comprehensive than the aggregate of the individual experiences. This is possible, of course, only if he is sincere. Then the reader feels that here is a man who wrote because of an indefinable mandate from within. Then the poet's art becomes a compelling force.

The poet who is reflected in most of our poetry is a creature who is capable of receiving impressions very easily from external objects. He is more richly equipped with powers of deep, strong, and delicate reactions to external influences. He understands the interactions of human nature to a greater nicety than do most individuals. Hidden motives and secret springs of action reveal themselves more readily to his highly sensitized perception. Common things suggest to him infinite associations. No object of the world is entirely devoid of interest. His seeing is accompanied by feeling. But the ability to divine the deeper significance of the world carries with it a penalty. Whatever he experiences, he does so more acutely. When he is happy, his happiness borders upon ecstasy; when despondent, he is nigh to the pit itself—"keener pleasures, keener pain."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning said truly,

The poet hath the child's sight in his breast
And sees all new. What oftenest he has viewed
He views with the first glory.

The poet does see all things "new," in their "first glory." At the same time he is all too painfully conscious of the fleeting character of their loveliness. For a moment only, muses the poet, is the rose in its perfect beauty and then moves on in obedience to the unevadable cycle of life—from life to death. The poet's mental powers of projection often place him in a new world. "Every man of genius," believes Havelock Ellis, "is a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, unlike other men, seeing everything as it were at a different angle, mirroring the world in his mind as in those concave or convex mirrors which elongate or abbreviate absurdly all who approach them."

The poet usually feels keenly his responsibility to mankind.

That which he sees and feels he must convey, partly to relieve his own soul and partly to share his thought with others. "Every great man," said John Burroughs, "is, in a way, an Atlas, with the weight of the world upon him."

For ages men have been striving to explain the act of composition. There is, beyond question, a certain "mystery and glorious agony" about it. The mind of the poet must, first of all, be stored with materials, such as pictures of objects, ideals, and pre-experienced feelings. Ofttimes silent preparation, though frequently indistinct and only subconsciously present in the mind of the poet, has preceded actual writing. Meditation during periods of imposed solitude is often the preparatory battleground of the soul. When, however, the moment has arrived—when the poetic mood possesses him, he becomes clothed in a magical garment. He is a being other than himself. The mind and passions take on a burning vitality that fuses all available materials—images, feeling, perceptions, verse forms—into one magnetic pattern. All the while, the rational powers are there in the background, controlling the power of the mind and feelings lest they become too intense. The poet cannot tell how it was done; for the result is more than his ordinary powers could bring about. Browning expressed it thus in *Abt Vogler*:

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them, and lo, they are!

In Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography* we have as lucid a statement regarding the miracle of composition as we could hope to find:

There are usually some hours of agonizing doubt, almost of despair,—so at least it has been with me,—or perhaps some days. And then, with nothing settled in my brain as to the final development of events, with no capability of settling anything, but with a most distant conception of some character or characters, I have rushed at the work as a rider at a fence which he does not see.

Though this applies to the writing of prose, it may with even greater force be applied to poetry. The pleasure which he experiences who later reads the poem is as nothing compared to the ~~delight~~ which seizes the poet himself.

It is also quite certain that the cost in energy to the writer is oftentimes inconceivable. Horace once wrote:

Set down that work, and that alone, as good,
Which, blurred and blotted, checked and counterchecked,
Has stood all tests, and issued forth correct.

On one occasion a notable French literary character was approached by a young literary aspirant who sought advice on how to write. "There is only one recipe I have ever heard of," said the eminent man of letters: "take a quart or more of life-blood, mix it well with a bottle of ink and a spoonful of tears, and ask God to forgive the blots." James Gilman said of Coleridge that "when his health permitted, he would drudge and work more laboriously at some of the mechanical parts of literature than any man I ever knew." Of his *Christabel* Coleridge himself said: "Every line has been produced by me with labor pangs." Wordsworth's sister gives us a picture in her diary, March 3, 1802, of her brother at work: "I was so unlucky as to propose to rewrite 'The Pedlar.' William got to work, and was worn to death." After James Russell Lowell had written his *Commemoration Ode* he remarked in a letter to Richard Watson Gilder: "Till within two days of the celebration I was hopelessly dumb, and then it came with a rush, literally making me lean (*mi face magro*) and so nervous that I was weeks in getting over it." Whatever labor poets like Milton and Tennyson have spent on revision, we must ever remember that sometime during the process they rose, as it were, above the stature of men, and momentarily lived in a rarer, more resplendent atmosphere.

POETRY AND EXPERIENCE

There are certain characteristics which all true poetry manifests. The foremost of these is that poetry interprets human experiences. The theme of poetry is man himself—his feelings and his ideals. Mankind is constantly inquiring into the mystery of human personality and existence, untiringly reaching out for the inexplicable and continually speculating in the realm of the unfathomable. Though the mystery of life remains unsolved, the quest for a suitable answer continues to be intensely engaging. Henry N. Hudson believes that the world's great poets "have

always recognized that poetry is made out of life, belongs to life, and exists for life." The experiences which poetry presents may be simple or complex in nature, varying from those which underlie Stevenson's childhood verses to those which are reflected in Browning's dramatic character studies. In scope these experiences may be personal, national, or universal.

Whatever the nature of the experience, whether or not a poem impresses a reader must largely depend upon the reader himself. To derive the full benefit from a poet's work, the reader should co-operate with the poet. Literature is not a sourcebook of information, rather a mirror in which the individual reader may see himself. To appreciate good poetry the reader must bring a live soul, full of curiosity and of interest in everyday life. He must be eager to carry forward any suggestion which the poet may launch. Openness to experience, whether in the form of an emotion, thought, or action, is essential. The reader should enliven the poem with his own memory and aspiration. In true reading there is, thus, a blending of two souls, the poet's and the reader's. He who reads sympathetically and understandingly becomes, in a sense, a poet; for he lives over again, with the poet, some experience which they have had in common. When the reader finds tangibly expressed an idea which he himself has dimly conceived, perhaps long before, but could never frame into words, the discovery brings him intense enjoyment, second only to his who created it. Many a mother finds keen pleasure in Tennyson's *Sweet and Low*. William Cowper's *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture* leads sons and daughters yearly to review hallowed memories of a departed mother. With Cowper, we have thought many things in connection with the departure of Mother—we have thought the following; but how many of us could express it thus?

—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Austin Dobson's playful treatment of time in the poem, *When I Saw You Last, Rose*, is rich in suggestion for an older person who has watched some young girl growing from babyhood to womanhood. Those who have reached the zenith of life and

are now slowly descending toward the sunset days will find their own thoughts meeting them in Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, Emerson's *Terminus*, or in Masfield's *On Growing Old*. The courageous spirit embodied in the last stanza of *Terminus* is noteworthy:

As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed.'

It is true, however unfortunately, that a man can sound no other depth but his own. "We carry within us," observed Sir Thomas Browne, "the wonders we seek without us." If a poem is to have richness, depth, power, and a range for us, we must bring these qualities with us. "The appreciation of literature," Chauncey Brewster Tinker believes, "develops in exact proportion to the growth of our own spirit." Arthur Schopenhauer insisted that "the impression made by a masterpiece varies with the capacity of the mind to understand it." The genuineness and extensiveness of our experiences determine our appreciation. Certain poems will not reveal themselves at first reading. We may take courage in the thought that literature is appropriated only gradually, that our power of comprehending it is a power which grows with our own growth. The poem which we are reading may possibly have been written by a man of infinitely greater experience. To such a poem we need to return again and again, each time bringing some new element from our stock of accumulated experiences.

Poetry, then, furnishes a key to our own hearts and to the lives of others. Or, again, it is an outlet. Self-expression is essential to every normal, healthy creature—for the reader as well as for the poet. When the reader understandingly reads a poem, he will find that it is for him a sort of self-expression; for he becomes almost one with the poet in so far as the poem reflects an experience which they both have had. Tennyson understood this principle of life. The first stanza in "Home They Brought

Her Warrior Dead" gives us a picture of a princess in that hopeless state of grief which cannot express itself:

Home they brought her warrior dead;
 She nor swooned nor uttered cry:
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 'She must weep or she will die.'

and giving them a substantial wording, and in reliving within In so far as the poet aids us in liberating our own impressions our own consciousness our own experiences in heightened form—to that extent has he made life glow for us. The poet therefore aids us not only in enlarging our experiences but also in improving the quality of them; for we see them through the more highly sensitized and spiritualized eye of the poet.

For the poet, nothing in the world is common or uninteresting. Those objects and thoughts which, for many of us, become trite, for him sparkle with interest. James F. Farrier once defined genius as "the power of seeing wonders in common things." Robert Burns wrote forty-eight lines on a field mouse and fifty-four on a mountain daisy. Poets have seen beauty in stables and taverns, tramps and hermits, milkmaids and hirelings, cows and dogs. To think of a tree merely as so much wood is unworthy of a man. How differently Joyce Kilmer sees it:

I think that I shall never see
 A poem lovely as a tree.

High school love affairs usually turn out not to be such serious things; and yet the girl of our early affections again appears in all her bygone attractiveness when we read Winthrop M. Praed's *The Belle of the Ball-Room*, a stanza of which follows:

She smiled on many, just for fun,—
 I knew that there was nothing in it;
 I was the first—the only one
 Her heart had thought of for a minute.
 I knew it, for she told me so,
 In phrase which was divinely molded;
 She wrote a charming hand,—and oh!
 How sweetly all her notes were folded.

How understandingly he summarizes this early love:

Our love was like most other loves;—
A little glow, a little shiver,
A rose-bud, and a pair of gloves,
And 'Fly not yet'—upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted;
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows,—and then we parted.

But for the poet we should forget many great experiences and personalities of the past. The poet records and preserves many incidents, and with his unforgettable words keeps alive the memory of certain people of poignant character who impressed not only the poet but oftentimes the community or nation as well. Alexander Pope understood the tragedy of oblivion when he reminded us in one of his best couplets that

Vain was the chief's, the sage's pride!
They had no poet, and they died.

It is unfortunate when an inspiring episode is not recorded and handed down to encourage the generations that follow. Tennyson has so well pictured for us in *The Revenge* the gallant fight of the Revenge with the Spanish fleet that the heroism of that sea fight will never be forgotten. Browning's *Hervé Riel* is an eternal reminder of the time when Hervé Riel, the unselfish Breton sailor, saved the French squadron when beaten at Cape la Hogue and flying before the English to St. Malo, by guiding it through the shallows of the Rance river. Even more lamentable is it when a great soul is utterly forgotten. Arthur Hallam lives because *In Memoriam* was written in his honor. Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous Headmaster of Rugby, will not be forgotten so long as Matthew Arnold's *Rugby Chapel* continues to be read.

Were our experiences to remain mere matter-of-fact incidents, they would fulfill only partly their mission in life. It is when they become idealized that they perform their greatest service. Literature, more than any other form of writing, is the "storehouse of ideals." Ideals, rather than ideas, determine a people's civilization. Ideas are what we think; ideals that for which we strive and dream. "The human soul," said Victor Hugo, the French poet, novelist, and dramatist of the nineteenth century,

"has still greater need of the ideal than of the real. It is by the real that we exist; it is by the ideal that we live. Would you realize the difference? Animals exist; man lives." One of the qualities that differentiates man from other creatures is that he is a dreamer. Dreams are substantial, persistent things, as an American poet of the present century, Dana Burnet, has pointed out in *Who Dreams Shall Live*:

Who *dreams* shall live! And if we do not dream
 Then we shall build no Temple into Time.
 Yon dust cloud, whirling slow against the sun,
 Was yesterday's *cathedral*, stirred to gold
 By heedless footsteps of a passing world.
 The faiths of *stone* and steel are failed of proof,
 The King who made religion of a *Sword*
 Passes, and is forgotten in a day.
 The crown he wore rots at a lily's root,
 The rose unfurls her banners o'er his dust.

The dreamer dies, but never dies fair dream,
 Though Death shall call the whirlwind to his aid,
 Enlist men's passions, trick their hearts with hate,
 Still the fair vision lives! Say nevermore
 That *dreams* are fragile things. What else endures
 Of all this *broken world save only dreams!*

One of the marvels of poetry is its compactness and its brevity. It is able to flash a picture or an idea upon us in the fewest possible words. This fact makes it necessary for the poet to do much culling. He retains but a small fraction of that which occurs to him. Deep feeling despises wordiness. Someone has said that poetry is the language of the gods and that gods waste no words. Rossetti in *The Blessed Damozel* flashes a picture of the universe, in two lines, when he tells how the damozel, looking from Heaven high above, saw

Time like a pulse shake fierce
 Through all the worlds.

It is remarkable with what few words Meredith can state clearly a complex idea. In *The Lark Ascending* he hears the lark pouring forth his strains high above the valley. The poet sees, as it

were, these strains falling down upon the golden grain in this cup-like valley:

Our valley is his golden cup;
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes.

How often we have stood upon the shore of the ocean and watched the waves coming in, one after another, and disappearing again one by one. We thought how truly it typifies the fleeting nature of Time. Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets, compresses all this into four lines:

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

As we grow older, we shall often think about youth, maturity, and old age, of how sin creeps in to mar our bodies, intended by the Maker to last forever; and we shall often be reminded of how youthful purity ends at last in age, decrepitude, and death. Notice how Shelley conveys this picture of life in these three lines from *Adonais*:

Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

POETRY AND UNIVERSALITY

The human experiences which the best poetry reveals are of a universal nature. They have more than local or temporary significance. The broadly representative element in successful poems is one test of a literary classic. That art is therefore most permanent which employs universal images: fields, trees, lakes, birds, mountains, clouds, etc. Universal feelings, such as sonship to God, the brotherhood of man, and the elemental responses to joy, pity, fear, and pain likewise contribute to the continuance of art. It is on this account that *Job* and the *Psalms* are fresh with every year and day.

It is for this reason that the great writers of antiquity appear so modern in their outlook. They make us realize that there

are certain things which Time cannot age. William Watson, in *Lachrimae Musarum*, voices this persistence of true poetry:

The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer;
 The grass of yesteryear
 Is dead; the birds depart, the groves decay:
 Empires dissolve and people disappear:
 Song passes not away.
 Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
 And kings a dubious legend of their reign;
 The swords of Caesars, they are less than rust:
 The poet doth remain.

Great poetry, in as much as it concerns itself with those instincts which are inborn and unchanging in human nature, continues to withstand the ravages of time and the freaks of fashion. This fact is made clearer when we examine the poetry of widely separated centuries. For instance, the worship of some superior being is ingrained in the human heart. As early as two thousand years before the Christian era we find these lines in the Assyrian *Hymn to Marduk*:

O Mighty, powerful, strong one of Ashur,
 O exalted prince, first-born of Nu-Dim-Nud,
 O Marduk, terrible one, who maketh Eturra to rejoice,
 Lord of Esagila, support of Babylon, lover of Ezida,
 Protector of all living, patron of E-mahtila, renewer of life,
 Protector of the land, benefactor of peoples, far and wide.
 Forever the ruler of the shrines,
 Forever is thy name acceptable in the mouth of the people,
 O Marduk, great lord—
 By thy illustrious command, Let me live, let me prosper and
 Let me honour thy divinity! *

In Greece, fifteen hundred years later, essentially the same idea is found in Aeschylus' *Hymn to Zeus*, taken from the First Chorus of *Agamemnon*:

Zeus,—by what name soe'er
 He glories being addressed,
 Even by that holiest name
 I name the highest and the Best.

* From Caroline Miles Hill's *The World's Great Religious Poetry*.

On Him I cast my troublous care,
My only refuge from despair:
Weighing all else, in Him alone I find
Relief from this vain burden of the mind.*

Almost another fifteen hundred years later we come to a poem attributed to Charlemagne, *Veni Creator Spiritus*:

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit every pious mind,
Come, pour thy joys on humankind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make us temples worthy thee.*

POETRY AND EMOTION

The experiences which great poetry interprets are such as arouse emotion. If the many definitions of art stress any one element, it is that emotion or feeling lies closest to the soul of art. Havelock Ellis once defined art as "the athletics of the emotions." "It is not understanding that creates works of art," says Julius Stinde, "but feeling; it is to feeling that we owe all that is best in us."

In life as we know it, emotion is a great force, a thing of extreme unrest. The adage that "feelings rule the world" is true for generation after generation. Feeling induces man to aid those of his fellow beings who are in distress. It is emotion that brings tears to our eyes, that clenches our fists in retaliation. Emotion is written deeply in all the annals of martyrdom and in all the accounts of heroism. Feeling enlists the strength of millions of men to defend home and country, even though that might mean months and years of privation.

Since emotion is such a powerful and essential factor in life, it is important that it be kept alive and healthy by finding for it suitable exercise. That man's feelings are stirred is an evidence of health; for the emotion which remains unexpressed may eventually disappear altogether, or may find exercise in channels perverse and dangerous. The capacity for feeling, it seems, is often dulled by our lives in cities, surrounded as we

* From Caroline Miles Hill's *The World's Great Religious Poetry*.

are by every convenience which thwarts a vital and human interest in life. Were we subjected more to the scenes of hill and stream, to the howl of tempest, to the night and marvels of nature—her mysteries, her perils—we should be more likely to develop that living and fervent spirit which is so necessary to a beautiful and convincing emotional life.

To guide this emotional force so that it will be most helpful to all is one of the most necessary tasks in the process of civilization. The feelings must be refined. Even the enlarging of the mind and the cultivation of the intellect are both subservient to it. Sheer mentality is in itself a destitute thing. Even facts, as such, have no place in either life or art unless they are made the absolute servant of the human soul. Refined feelings use facts to the greatest advantage; for feelings that have been purged of baseness have due regard for the sanctity of the individual.

Poetry, among the arts, gives emotion the most varied as well as the most satisfying channel of expression. "It is in giving voice," distinguishes Theodore Watts-Dunton, "not to emotion at its tensest, but to the variations of emotion; it is in expressing the countless shifting movements of the soul from passion to passion, that poetry shows in spite of all her infirmities her superiority to the plastic arts." Were it not for the kindly ministrations of poetry, many persons would never realize the fullest joy which their contemplative nature affords. Professor George E. Woodberry appreciated this mission of literature when he wrote that "in the private experience of a cultivated man the imaginary life lived in art and dream and the stirring of the thousand susceptibilities of his nature that never pass from his consciousness outward but are shut in his own silent world, is a large part of reality to him, in a strict sense—it is his larger life, the life of the soul. Lyric poetry holds its high place by virtue of its power to nourish such a life."

The reason why poetry can thus furnish such a suitable outlet for the emotions can be stated very briefly. When the poet wrote his poem, he was gripped by a very definite sentiment. This spiritual essence is the best and most abiding force in the thing created. The appropriation of this feeling on the part of the reader constitutes one of the chief delights that poetry can bring. In the larger sense, the reader of poetry has a unique privilege—that of being guided into the same state of feeling as that which

moved the poet at the time of writing. He may feel the pulse of the mighty. The intense moments are those which poetry particularly delights in immortalizing. Although infrequent, they yet constitute the very heart of mortal existence. "Let us not judge life," W. H. Davies urges, "by its number of breaths, but by the number of times that breath is held, or lost, either under a deep emotion caused by love, or when we stand before an object of interest or beauty." Not only this, but by reawakening within us the importance of human charity and by holding before us noble deeds, poetry brings us anew to a realization of our common humanity and our interdependence one upon the other. Truly great poetry keeps alive love and joy and tends to banish hate and fear.

Robert Burns is a good example of a poet whose writings are vitalized by a glowing emotional power. Burns had a soul that felt keenly. He knew the value of feelings, as evidenced in his poetic creed:

Give me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then, tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, tho' hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

This "hamely" Muse does touch the heart in Burns' *Of A' the Airts the Wind Can Blaw*. In these few lines he has given us a fervent picture of love that is as fresh as the "dewy flow'rs" and as captivating as the notes of "tunefu' birds." Notice, though, the almost uncanny simplicity of the lines:

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow an' rivers row
An' monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet an' fair:

I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air.
There's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

POETRY AND IMAGINATION

The experiences which poetry enshrines are not only universal in nature; they do not only arouse emotion; but they are, in addition, enriched by the creative imagination of the poet and by the receptive imagination of the reader. Poetry is the most musical, most concentrated type of imaginative literature. Poetry has the power of condensing and re-creating experience in such a manner as to increase its clarity for the reason and to intensify it for the feelings. For this reason poetry affords us as readers the best means of escape from humdrum surroundings. Nowhere else are the experiences of our daily life projected in so pure and in so undiluted a form as in poetry. The amazing thing about it all is that the poet can fashion his most magnetic visions from the very common things which we can all smell, hear, taste, see, and touch.

We need the *reason* of prose and we need the *imagination* of poetry. For both of these, truth is the ultimate goal; but they follow divergent routes. As a result, truth, when found by prose and by poetry, has not the same appearance. The botanist's conception of a daffodil is reflected in terms such as calyx, corolla, stamens, petals, and pistil. The poet's idea is concerned with color, fragrance, general appearance, and the flower's place in our thoughts and dreams. The poet sees the rose as most people see it or wish to see it. Because he enlarges the scope of his own and, in turn, of another's experience, he may be regarded as a true explorer in the realms of thought and feeling hitherto uncharted.

POETRY AND MELODY

In the next place, the language by which these human experiences are reflected in poetry is musical or melodic. Poetry gains in meaning when interpreted by the human voice. Though the

rhythmically arranged words which constitute poetry make a less complete, less obvious appeal to the sense of hearing than does music, the flow of verbal melody, whether heard by the ear or imagined by the mind, has a powerful charm.

After the artist has conceived his subject, his difficulties and triumphs as a craftsman lie in the region of technicalities. Much labor, directed by a mind of unusual vitality and insight, is often expended in the production of a real work of art. It is not necessary that the poet have a knowledge of technical music. Coleridge, Shelley, and Rossetti are among those to whom the laws of musical technique were unknown. However, it is essential that the writer of poetry have a keen appreciation of the tonal qualities of words. To adjust properly the sound of words to the particular meaning requires a nice sense of balance. "Art," thinks Robert Frost, "always suggests simple balance." Now the reader, if he is to appreciate work that is thus finely wrought, should in his turn have some knowledge of the metrical principles which the artist employed. We need not go deeply into the intricacies of prosody; but we need to know those basic laws of metrics which will give us an idea of how the poet's effect was achieved. These fundamental principles will be discussed in the second chapter.

Happily, in countless poems, the metrical charm may be revealed by the reading voice. The sound of galloping horses is readily heard in Alfred Noyes' *The Highwayman*, a stanza of which follows:

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—

Riding—riding—

The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn door.

The sound of the drum is the basic rhythm in Guy H. McMaster's *Carmen Bellicosum*:

In their ragged regimentals,
Stood the old Continentals,
Yielding not,
While the grenadiers were lunging,

And like hail fell the plunging
Cannon-shot;
When the files
Of the isles,
From the smoky night-encampment, bore the banner of the rampant
Unicorn;
And grummer, grummer, grummer, rolled the roll of the drummer
Through the morn!

In concluding this first chapter, we should be reminded that poetry is an art, and that its characteristic excellency is to be found in the universal experiences which it portrays emotionally, imaginatively, and melodically. The fact that those experiences which poetry interprets are presented emotionally and imaginatively does not exclude the intellectual element. The intellect must ever be present to restrain the feelings and prevent the poet from becoming violent in his sentiments. The intelligence is a sort of anchor rope which prevents the soaring mood of the poet from losing itself in too high an altitude. The work dare not approach the verge of disgust if it is to please. The basis, therefore, of its appeal must be in the intelligence as well as in the realms of emotion and fancy.

To gain the greatest satisfaction from poetry, as readers we should let our minds wander as the poet directs, unfettered by prejudices and formulas. We should be eager to feel, to dream, and to listen as the poet directs. Then the grand concourse of emotion, imagination, and melody will set up a vibrant response unlike anything to be found in the best prose or in any of the other arts.

QUESTIONS

1. Support your agreement or disagreement with the following statement by Lyof N. Tolstoi:

Great works of art are only great because they are accessible or comprehensible to every one.

2. Edward H. Griggs writes that

The test of an artistic masterpiece is its power to grow with our growth, revealing new deeps as we bring the key of enlarged experience to its interpretation.

In what sense does this hold true for Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*?

3. How does John Drinkwater characterize great poetry in the following lines?

For it is to be remembered that this achievement of the best words in the best order is, perhaps, the rarest to which man can reach, implying as it does a coincidence of unfettered imaginative ecstasy with superb mental poise. The poet's perfect expression is the token of a perfect experience.

4. Is Percy Bysshe Shelley too superlative in his assertion that literature gives us "the brightest thoughts of the brightest men in the brightest moments of their lives?" Defend your point of view.

5. What does Michelangelo mean when he says that "Art is the purgation of superfluities?"

6. After a thorough reading of Chapter I, formulate your own definition of poetry.

7. Consider the following definition of literature, which appears on a certain city library in the state of Pennsylvania:

The storehouse of knowledge, the record of civilization, the fulcrum for the lever of progress.

In what respects is each of these foregoing phrases true?

8. Point out the imaginative elements in the following poems:

John Milton: *L'Allegro*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Christabel*

Percy Bysshe Shelley: *The Cloud*

Ralph Waldo Emerson: *The Humble-Bee*

9. What did Richard Wagner mean by the following?

And indeed the greatness of the poet may be best measured by that concerning which he is silent, in order to let the unspeakable itself speak to us silently. It is only the musician who can bring this that is silent into clear expression; and the unerring form of *his* loud-resounding silence is endless melody!

10. Explain in your own words what Carl Sandburg means by each of the following statements about poetry:

- (a) Poetry is a puppet-show, where riders of sky-rockets and divers of sea fathoms gossip about the sixth sense and the fourth dimension.
 - (b) Poetry is any page from a sketchbook of outlines of a door-knob with thumb-prints of dust, blood, dreams.
 - (c) Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during the moment.
11. Write a synopsis of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, *The Poet*.
12. According to the following poems, what are the sources of the poet's inspiration?
- Joel Benton: *The Poet*
 William Blake: *The Bard*
 John Clare: *The Peasant Poet*
 Thomas Curtis Clark: *The Poet's Call*
 William James Dawson: *Inspirations*
 Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: *Inspiration*
 Richard Watson Gilder: *How to the Singer Comes the Song?*
 John B. Tabb: *Inspiration*
 Sara Teasdale: *Song Making*
- (These poems appear in Caroline Miles Hill's *The World's Great Religious Poetry*.)
13. What qualifications, according to Bryant's *The Poet*, should a poet have?
14. What do you think about William Lyon Phelps' opinion that "Browning's *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* is the greatest horseback poem in the literature of the world?" In this connection you might refer to Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride*, Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West*, and Noyes' *The Highwayman*.
- In each of the foregoing poems notice how the rhythm carries out the movement of horse and rider.
15. Study the following groups of poems as illustrations of how the same subject appeals differently to different people:
- (a) Christina Rossetti's *Song* (When I am dead, my dearest)
 - Robert Louis Stevenson's *Requiem*

- (b) John Keats' "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art"

Matthew Arnold's *Self-Dependence*

- (c) Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*

Robert Browning's *Epilogue*

16. What is your opinion of the following statement which Robert Frost made in a public lecture?

Art consists in getting oneself into trouble and then getting oneself out.

17. We observed in the first chapter that the experiences which poetry reflects should be universal. What does Percy Bysshe Shelley say on this point in the following?

A great poem is a fountain for ever overflowing with waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight.

18. What kind of person is the poet? What does he strive to do? What answers do the following poets give to these questions?

William Watson: *The Sovereign Poet*

Rhys Carpenter: *The Master Singers*

Angelo Morgan: *The Poet*

Amy Lowell: *The Poet*

Edwin Markham: *The Poet*

Lloyd Mifflin: *Sovereign Poets*

Yone Noguchi: *The Poet*

(These poems appear in Caroline Miles Hill's *The World's Great Religious Poetry*.)

19. Read the following poetic definitions of poetry, then write out in prose your own interpretation:

Ella Heath: *Poetry*

Amy Lowell: *Fragment*

20. Consider the ability of poetry to paint a picture by turning to Wordsworth's sonnet, *Upon Westminster Bridge*.
21. What does Tolstoi mean by the assertion that "counterfeit art is more ornate, true art modest"?

22. The genuineness of the emotion which underlies certain poems has often been questioned by those who think of the alterations a poem underwent at the hands of the artist subsequent to its first creating. Do the following sentences, taken from Lane Cooper's *The Study of Literature*, adequately remove the objections?

It is indubitably true that that passion cannot be very strong which we are at leisure to describe. But a man of genius feels more intensely, and suffers more strongly than another; and for this very reason, when the force of his passion has subsided, he retains for a longer period the recollection of what it has been, and can more easily imagine himself again under its influence; and, in my conception, what we call the power of imagination is chiefly the combination of strong feelings and recollections. Thus a man of genius is peculiarly gifted with the faculty of observing the secret workings of human nature as she prevails in his own heart, and in the hearts of all mankind; and is enabled to describe those feelings, and bring them home to every reader. The great secret of the poet's art is to make us feel our existence by the force of sympathy.

23. In the following excerpt Arthur Schopenhauer points out certain qualifications which we who are seeking to appreciate poetry ought to develop. In your own words restate these.

Just as the sun cannot shed its light but to the eye that sees it, nor music sound but to the hearing ear, so the value of all masterly work in art and science is conditioned by the kinship and capacity of the mind to which it speaks. It is only such a mind as this that possesses the magic word to stir and call forth the spirits that lie hidden in great work. To the ordinary mind a masterpiece is a sealed cabinet or mystery,—an unfamiliar musical instrument from which the player, however much he may flatter himself, can draw none but confused tones. How different a painting looks when seen in a good light, instead of in some dark corner!

24. What procedure in the reading of poetry does William Wordsworth outline in the following?

If the eye of the poet must be steadily fixed upon his subject, the eye of the student must be steadily fixed upon the form of the poem as a whole, then upon each detail of it, and again upon the synthesis of all the parts. His first duty is to see the details and the whole precisely as they are; in other words, his first duty is exact observation.

VERSE FORM

ART has its technical as well as its imaginative and emotional aspects. It is not enough that the artist be actuated by some worthy thought and that he be stirred to a high pitch of enthusiasm. He must, in addition, find the most suitable vehicle with which to convey this thought and enthusiasm; otherwise the agitation of his mind and soul will have been of no avail. He must be able to pass on the fervor of his personality and the full significance of his ideas to others with the least possible loss through the art of transmission.

To find the best medium of expressing his ideas is then the problem of the artist. Given a particular thought or impression to convey, he should be so informed about the technique of his own art that from a list of possible schemes he may select that one form which exactly suits his purpose. This implies, however, that the artist be familiar with the various forms and know something of the particular effect which each has when linked with thought and feeling.

Of all the arts, poetry makes the most exacting demands in that it furnishes the poet with the most complex instrument. On the keyboard of this instrument are innumerable stops—various metrical beats, line lengths, rhymes, words, etc. To use the proper ones for a given theme is the poet's task. The test of his selection is the sound which is emitted from the instrument. If there is a perfect blending between the theme and the forms employed in presenting it, we the readers are pleased, and the poem is a success.

The precise nature of the pleasure which we as readers or hearers derive from poetry cannot easily be determined. The meaning conveyed by the words and the recognition of the whole as a piece of art are at the basis of much of our enjoyment. Added to the foregoing, however, is the physical pleasure which comes as a result of the music in poetry. Though words bring up definite

objects and abstractions, and, when combined, convey interesting ideas and relations, when these same words are wedded to measure and melody, their inherent meaning is noticeably reinforced. Then intellect combines with emotion and spirit to stir the reader to his very soul.

But how is the poet to learn the secret of a perfect technique? The verse forms and the words which a poet adopts in expressing his various moods and ideas are chosen with the hope of producing an effect which is natural—which our experience tells us is true to the world of human beings and objects as we know it. Everywhere about us there is perceivable a fundamental rhythm which furnishes the tempo, so to speak, for all growth and action. If a poet wishes, for example, to interest us in a small stream running down through the valley, he will select words that our minds immediately associate with that stream, such as *fern, valley, stony ways, bays, pebbles, sparkle, bicker, chatter, bubble, babble*, etc. In addition to this, the poet will arrange these words in such a manner that when we read them, the swing reminds us unmistakably of the winding, babbling, gurgling streamlet:

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

.
I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

—from Tennyson's *The Song of the Brook*

In sharp contrast to the foregoing stanzas on the brook, notice how Byron describes the ocean in the following lines:

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime

The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

—from Byron's *Childe Harold*

Such words as *tempests*, *convulsed*, *gale*, *storm*, *dark-heaving*, and *fathomless* are not associated with rivulets and brooks. Byron, too, gives to his lines a larger sweep, characteristic of the wider expanse of the ocean, as in

Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime.

This line would be altogether unnatural for a brook, just as

I babble on the pebbles

would be utterly ridiculous for the ocean. Both Tennyson and Byron sought to make us see and hear the brook and the ocean in their respective lines.

Let us take two more examples. Matthew Arnold wrote *Rugby Chapel* in honor of his father, whose death he mourned deeply. For Arnold it was a sad theme. Therefore he begins his poem thus:

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the schoolroom windows;—but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

The general mood is clearly that of grief. Such words as *coldly*, *sadly*, *autumn evening*, *dank*, *fade*, *dimness*, *silent*, *solemn*, *austere*, and *darkness* are selected quite naturally. They are words which we usually associate with sadness and bereavement. Not only this, but the words are so arranged that the human voice is led to read them in a rather slow, throbbing, oppressive manner.

In contrast to the foregoing poem, notice the following lines from Whittier's *Laus Deo*:

Loud and long
Lift the old exulting song;
Sing with Miriam by the sea,
He has cast the mighty down;
Horse and rider sink and drown;
"He hath triumphed gloriously!"

In the first place, *loud*, *exulting*, *triumphed*, and *gloriously* lead us to think, not of despair, but of gladness. In the poem Whittier is praising God that the Civil War is over and won; and his praise and joyfulness select words that convey those ideas, and arrange them in lines that give the effect of joyous satisfaction, as in

Lift the old exulting song.

There are no words in this line which prevent us from reacting jubilantly. The thought, words, and swing of the line are in harmonious relationship, co-operating one with the other.

The query which the poet is therefore constantly seeking to answer with respect to his work is: "Is it natural?" We are accustomed to say that the world of nature is the poet's incomparable teacher. The inherent loveliness and perennial vigor of the old Hebrew Psalms, as they are revealed in the English versions, are largely due to the fact that their authors drank so deeply at the font of Nature. They were familiar with the appearance and the peculiarities of the mountain, the stream, and the stars—with the various aspects of outdoor life in general. So that when they referred to these in their poetry, they arranged their words in such a manner as to carry out a certain underlying balance, suggestive of the ~~object~~ they had in mind. When an underlying balance is perceivable in lines of words, we give to it the name of *rhythm*. Notice the rhythmic swing in the following, taken from Psalm 19:

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament sheweth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language,
 Where their voice is not heard.
 Their line is gone out through all the earth,
 And their words to the end of the world.
 In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun
 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
 And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.
 His going forth is from the end of the heaven,
 And his circuit unto the ends of it;
 And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The accented and unaccented syllables do not follow each other in such a manner as to enable us to reduce them to some definite verse pattern, to which we should give the name of *meter*; but there is a welding of sense and music which is perceivable even at one reading. Every line is properly timed for the thought which it conveys. Notice, for example, how the syllables *Day*, *un*, and *day*, in the third line, are stressed and held by the voice,

Day—y un—to day—y,

carrying out the idea of duration of time. The same effect is seen in

night unto night.

In

Their line is gone out through all the earth

we have the suggestion of vastness in the manner by which the voice naturally holds on to *gone out* and especially to *all*. This line of poetry naturally gives us the effect of something that is continuous and enveloping. Notice, finally, the exuberance and joy in

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
 And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

The words *bridegroom*, *rejoiceth*, *strong man*, and *race* are significantly chosen to suggest youth and buoyancy; and the voice naturally reads the lines with a lilting, happy swing. In the foregoing excerpt the interaction and harmony between rhythm and meaning is so perfect that they blend into one. This is the harmony that all art would fain emulate; for the rhythm of the world of nature is the rhythm of our very lives. The artist knows

if he could recapture this eternal rhythm, his work would endure forever.

The same rhythm which pervades all nature is naturally perceivable in human discourse. A great part of the pleasure derived from conversation is based upon the tonal qualities of the human voice. The modulations and the variations of syllabic stresses, the constant shifting of pitch and the changing speed of word pronunciation are all very real sources of pleasure. This fact is especially noticeable when we listen to a conversation in a tongue which we cannot understand. We are then very conscious of the rise and fall of the voice; now the suave, easy flow of humor, and again the explosive gutturals of rage; now the deliberate balance of contentment and again the soft and warm undertones of pity. Even in silent reading our minds are capable of registering the tonal qualities of the various characters in a story as they converse under varying circumstances in the course of a novel or a play.

An underlying rhythm, therefore, permeates all discourse, written or oral, prose or poetry. Can you think of reading the following paragraph from Henry David Thoreau's well-known essay on *Walking*, giving each syllable the same time of utterance and the same degree of loudness as every other?

Every sunset which I witness inspires me with the desire to go to a West as distant and as fair as that into which the sun goes down. He appears to migrate westward daily, and to tempt us to follow him. He is the Great Western Pioneer whom the nations follow. We dream all night of those mountain-ridges in the horizon, though they may be of vapor only, which were last gilded by his rays. The island of Atlantis, and the islands and gardens of the Hesperides, a sort of terrestrial paradise, appear to have been the Great West of the ancients, enveloped in mystery and poetry. Who has not seen in imagination, when looking into the sunset sky, the gardens of the Hesperides, and the foundation of all those fables?

No! In reading this passage, the voice rises and falls, hurries and pauses as it goes along from syllable to syllable. An attempt to read the dialogue of a novel or drama on a single note or key would prove still more disastrous. The peculiar thing about it all is that the prose coming from each individual writer has its own peculiar and personal ring. There are those who can detect at once the writings of such authors as Arnold, Ruskin, Emerson,

Huxley, and Stevenson. Apart from the thought content and the words, there is something about the swing of the lines that is individualistic.

The rhythmical quality is present to a greater or lesser extent in all prose writings, so that much prose falls on the borderland between prose and poetry. Sometimes the rhythm of a piece of writing is so pronounced as to lead the writer to divide it into lines of equal or approximately equal lengths or into such line-lengths as the meaning and rhythmical unit may suggest, and possibly into stanzas. The result is no longer prose but poetry. The piece has taken on a musical quality far in excess of that which characterizes prose. To make the point a little clearer let us divide syllables into those that are *accented* and those that are *unaccented*; for English meter is based upon the accent of English words. We stress *ad* less than *mire* in *admire*, likewise *ly* less than *sure* in *surely*. Now to indicate these stresses, let us use the symbol — to represent an accented syllable, and ∪ an unaccented syllable. In prose accented and unaccented syllables occur in an irregular order, as may be seen in a sentence taken from the foregoing excerpt:

Every sunset which I witnessed inspires me with the
 desire to go to a West as distant and as fair as that into which
 the sun goes down.

You will observe that neither the accented nor the unaccented syllables follow in regularly stated intervals. In poetry the arrangement of syllables is alternate accented and unaccented and usually regular, as for example ∪-∪-∪- or -∪-∪-∪-. Accented and unaccented syllables are usually grouped together in such a way as to form units, which consist each of two or more syllables, called a *foot*. Thus Whittier's line,

The sun that brief December day,

contains four units or feet. Going back to the foregoing sentence of prose, if we should take

Every sun

as constituting the first metrical unit, we do not find the second,

set which I

the same; the accented, rather than the unaccented, syllable comes first in this second unit. For the sake of making the contrast more effective, let us take the two stanzas in Sara Teasdale's *Thoughts*:

When I can make my thoughts come forth
 To walk like ladies up and down,
 Each one puts on before the glass
 Her most becoming hat and gown.
 But oh, the shy and eager thoughts
 That hide and will not get them dressed,
 Why is it that they always seem
 So much more lovely than the rest?

These eight lines all employ the iambic foot. That is to say, there is a regular swing from one unaccented syllable (u) to one accented (-) throughout these lines.

Poetry then is the most regular and most melodic form of human discourse. When we begin reading a poem, we quickly fall into the swing of it. After reading several lines from Poe's *The Raven*,

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
 As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
 "Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
 Only this and nothing more,"

the mind adapts itself to the given line length and to the recurrence of certain sounds as *dreary*, *weary* and *napping*, *tapping* at given places. To find these throughout the poem gratifies the reader; and these, together with other special devices which we shall consider later, assist the memory and make memorization a desirable pastime.

Up to this point, our discussion indicated that a certain rhythm underlies all nature. The poet resorts to some special device in

representing the shuffling of the wind through a thousand leaves just as he does in reproducing the playful brook and the tempest-laden ocean. We have noted, also, that the cadences of man's speech are noticeable in both prose and poetry, but that this rhythmic quality is heightened in poetry. From the first, man was delighted with poetic expression and early began to study it with the desire of making it more and more lovely. This he could not do without inquiring somewhat into and experimenting with the various qualities of poetic technique. We come then to see that verse form is an essential part of poetry. Poetic forms have exerted a vital influence on the work of poets at various times during their writing career. It is well known that Spenser, Milton, and Wordsworth thought much about verse forms. Up to a certain point, rules challenge the artist and draw from him work of a higher order. It should be obvious that in every poet there is an innate conscious or subconscious interest in form. The various literary types and fashions are the tools with which he works. They are his servants, not his masters.

For the true poet, the choice of a specific form is rarely deliberate. Impelled by an overwhelming desire to write, the poet selects the form as naturally as he does the subject. They are all a part of the miracle of creative art. If the poet is actuated by a good conscience and an undeviating sincerity, he will almost unconsciously select the proper mold; and the particular form which he selects will bring him delight of the deepest and truest kind.

So vital a factor is rhythm in poetry that certain pieces depend almost solely upon it for their charm and power. Lacking any convincing logical statement of thought, they are yet fruitful of thoughts and emotions too profound for statement. Robert Burns has endeared many a reader to him by his *John Anderson, My Jo*:

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent;
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And many a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' one anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

Stating the thought succinctly, the aged wife, seated beside her still more aged husband, very tenderly reflects upon their young and now their old days, the activity and beauty of the youthful years and the decrepitude but quiet tranquillity of their old age. But is that all? In technical language, we should say that there is a marked time sequence; and that the poem consists of sixteen alternate four-foot and three-foot lines. In such language we are merely attempting, however, to name the phenomenon, not to explain it. As is the case in all poetry of a superior order, the language is straightforward, and the sentiments expressed have the power of universality; but what of that? Of many other poems might this be said. We shall have to make the usual admission that to analyze the intrinsic charm of any exquisite passage is possible only up to a certain point; the reader's sense of pleasure, if more than ephemeral, is of so complicated and so individualistic a nature as to defy a full explanation. On the other hand, the inner musical ear of the poet selects words with such a nicety, and so interfuses sentiment, words, and melody that brief stretches of poetry are created which are unforgettable.

While we cannot always fully explain in technical language just why a given poem has charm and power, we can, however, understand a great deal about the poet's technique. The basic principles underlying this technique we shall now examine briefly.

Foot

First of all, let us consider the unit of English verse, namely the foot. We have already defined the foot as consisting of a certain number of syllables, accented and unaccented. The metrical feet usually listed in special treatises on English prosody are as follows:

iambus	(\cup - as in <i>afraid</i>)
trochee	(- \cup as in <i>laught^{er}</i>)
anapest	($\cup \cup$ - as in <i>int^{er}rupt</i>)
dactyl	(- $\cup \cup$ as in <i>merriment</i>)
spondee	(- - as in <i>all right</i>)
amphibrach	(\cup - \cup as in <i>p^oet^o</i>)
amphimacer	(- \cup - as in <i>Harrisburg</i>)

To these might be added the infrequently used pyrrhic ($\cup \cup$), ionic (- - $\cup \cup$ or $\cup \cup$ - -), anapestic paeon ($\cup \cup \cup$ -), and dactylic paeon (- $\cup \cup \cup$). Of the entire list here given we shall concern ourselves primarily with the first four, the iambus, trochee, anapest, and dactyl; for these make up the great bulk of our English verse. The iambus and the anapest both begin with unaccented syllables and end with accented syllables, namely \cup - and $\cup \cup$ -. Because they thus ascend from the less important to the more important syllables, they are sometimes called *ascending* feet. The trochee (- \cup) and the dactyl (- $\cup \cup$) for the opposite reason are known as *descending* feet. On the other hand, the iambus and the trochee consist each of two syllables, \cup - and - \cup , for which reason they are known as *double* or *duple* meters, whereas the anapest ($\cup \cup$ -) and the dactyl (- $\cup \cup$), composed each of three syllables, are called *triple* meters. English poetry more often uses the ascending than the descending rhythm, and more frequently employs the duple than the triple foot; for English speech tends toward the use of accented and unaccented syllables in equal proportions.

The iambus is the standard foot of English poetry. The naturalness of the iambic rhythm is to be accounted for by the fact that in our English language adjectives, prepositions, and pronouns more frequently precede than follow their nouns. The first syllable, therefore, in a line of poetry is more generally unaccented, as in

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise.

—Thomas Gray

*In my deep heart these chimes would still have rung
To toll your passing, had you not been dead.*

—George Santayana

*Her keen eyes light it; keen, yet often kind;
Her fair hair crowns it to an artist's mind.*

—Elaine G. Eastman

Theodore Watts-Dunton called the iambic rhythm that "weighty iambic movement." This weight and dignity of the iambic movement may be felt in our hymnology, in the great dramas of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Marlowe, and in the epics of Milton.

$\bar{\text{I}} \text{ } \bar{\text{saw}} \text{ } \bar{\text{when}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{at}} \text{ } \bar{\text{his}} \text{ } \bar{\text{word}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{the}} \text{ } \bar{\text{formless}} \text{ } \bar{\text{mass}},$
 $\bar{\text{This}} \text{ } \bar{\text{world's}} \text{ } \bar{\text{material}} \text{ } \bar{\text{mould}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{came}} \text{ } \bar{\text{to}} \text{ } \bar{\text{a}} \text{ } \bar{\text{heap}}:$
 $\bar{\text{Confusion}} \text{ } \bar{\text{heard}} \text{ } \bar{\text{his}} \text{ } \bar{\text{voice}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{and}} \text{ } \bar{\text{wild}} \text{ } \bar{\text{uproar}}$
 $\bar{\text{Stood}} \text{ } \bar{\text{ruled}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{stood}} \text{ } \bar{\text{vast}} \text{ } \bar{\text{Infinitude}} \text{ } \bar{\text{confined}};$

In these foregoing lines from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, notice the stately measured swing from unaccented to accented syllables. Note also that unaccented syllables, such as *his*, *came*, and *stood*, are made to convey important ideas. This utilization of the unstressed portions helps to pack the lines with thought and strength. More great poetry is written in the iambic rhythm than in all others combined.

We must, however, not get the impression that the iambic foot is used only for weighty and stately themes. George Meredith uses the iambic movement to characterize the flight and song of the lark in *The Lark Ascending*, from which we quote the first eight lines:

$\bar{\text{He}} \text{ } \bar{\text{rises}} \text{ } \bar{\text{and}} \text{ } \bar{\text{begins}} \text{ } \bar{\text{to}} \text{ } \bar{\text{round}},$
 $\bar{\text{He}} \text{ } \bar{\text{drops}} \text{ } \bar{\text{the}} \text{ } \bar{\text{silver}} \text{ } \bar{\text{chain}} \text{ } \bar{\text{of}} \text{ } \bar{\text{sound}},$
 $\bar{\text{Of}} \text{ } \bar{\text{many}} \text{ } \bar{\text{links}} \text{ } \bar{\text{without}} \text{ } \bar{\text{a}} \text{ } \bar{\text{break}},$
 $\bar{\text{In}} \text{ } \bar{\text{chirrup}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{whistle}}, \text{ } \bar{\text{slur}} \text{ } \bar{\text{and}} \text{ } \bar{\text{shake}},$
 $\bar{\text{All}} \text{ } \bar{\text{intervolved}} \text{ } \bar{\text{and}} \text{ } \bar{\text{spreading}} \text{ } \bar{\text{wide}},$
 $\bar{\text{Like}} \text{ } \bar{\text{water-dimples}} \text{ } \bar{\text{down}} \text{ } \bar{\text{a}} \text{ } \bar{\text{tide}}$
 $\bar{\text{Where}} \text{ } \bar{\text{ripple}} \text{ } \bar{\text{ripple}} \text{ } \bar{\text{overcurls}}$
 $\bar{\text{And}} \text{ } \bar{\text{eddy}} \text{ } \bar{\text{into}} \text{ } \bar{\text{eddy}} \text{ } \bar{\text{whirls}};$

The syllables, in the main, are short; and the words *silver chain*, *links*, *chirrup*, *slur*, *water-dimples*, *ripple*, *whirls*, etc., are selected to suggest the song of the lark. These devices give to the poem a light, musical effect. Swinburne, one of the most musical of nineteenth century poets, arrives at his delightful strains by a selection of words that blend one into the other with striking evenness and sweetness. His *Rococo* is merely one of the many from which we might quote:

Take hands and part with laughter;
 Touch lips and part with tears;
 Once more and no more after,
 Whatever comes with years.
 We twain shall not remeasure
 The ways that left us twain;
 Nor crush the lees of pleasure
 From sanguine grapes of pain.

Lines one, three, five, and seven end with unaccented syllables, namely *ter* and *ure*. These contribute to the iambic lines a sort of happy after-effect. The general airy swing of the lines blends agreeably with the fanciful thoughts which the poet wishes to convey. Frederick Locker-Lampson achieved an unusually light, rapidly moving effect with iambuses in *My Mistress's Boots*, in which he strives to give a playful imitation of the sound made by a young woman walking lightly but rapidly over the floor. The excitement of the waiting lover as he listens to the sound is reflected in the lines:

They nearly strike me dumb,—
 I tremble when they come
 Pit-a-pat:
 This palpitation means
 These boots are Geraldine's—
 Think of that!

Such words as *strike*, *dumb*, *come*, *Pit*, *pat*, *boots*, *that*, and, in the unquoted ensuing stanzas, *win*, *skin*, *kid*, *did*, *self*, *shod*, and *trod* are words which the tongue or teeth cut off very abruptly im-

mediately after they are pronounced. The voice can hold on indefinitely to such vowels as *low* and *sky*, called *open vowels*; but it cannot do so with *pat* and *did*, called *closed vowels*. These closed vowels tend to hurry the reader to the next word or line. They lend to the poem a sort of nervous and excitable speed. It will be evident that this bit of technique contributes to the tripping, fairylike movement. The swiftness of the measure is further accomplished by the shortness of the third and sixth lines in each stanza.

The iambus, like the other metrical units, is not always used exclusively throughout an entire poem. Frequently other feet are inserted, sometimes sparingly, at other times regularly in conjunction with the iambus. In Harold Monro's *Suburb*, for example, iammbuses and trochees appear in almost equal proportions:

Dull and hard the low wind creaks
 Among the rustling pampas plumes.
 Drearly the year consumes
 Its fifty-two insipid weeks.

In this stanza, the first and third lines are of a trochaic measure, while the second and fourth follow the iambic movement. One stanza from Hilaire Belloc's *The South Country* illustrates the joint use of iammbuses and anapests in the same poem:

I never get between the pines
 But I smell the Sussex air;
 Nor I never come on a belt of sand
 But my home is there.
 And along the sky the line of the Downs
 So noble and so bare.

The difference here is that the anapests appear in lines two, three, four, and five with iambic feet. The only purely iambic lines are the first and the last. Such a mixture of feet often helps to avoid monotony and adds variety and energy to a poem; but the poet must be deft in his handling of them. They must

enhance his theme and mood; they must not be thrown in promiscuously.

The second kind of foot, the trochee (— ◡), follows the iambus in popularity. In the main, it gives to poetry a zestful, emphatic swing. The initial syllable in the line is stressed,

Wake! The silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness trims,

—Alfred Housman's *Reveille*

which fact is likely to induce an animated reading of the poem. The principle involved is somewhat the same as that in ordinary prose composition, where, in order to emphasize a certain word, we place it first, as for example in

Today we shall leave.

Trochaic lines in English poetry may end with either an accented or an unaccented syllable. Ben Jonson's *Song: To Celia* employs both kinds:

Come, my Celia, let us prove
While we can, the sports of love.
Time will not be ours for ever;
He, at length, our good will sever.

The first two lines lack the unaccented syllable of the last foot; the term *catalectic* is used to designate this type of trochaic line. The last two lines end with an unaccented syllable; they are *acatalectic*. Longfellow used both of these alternately in his *A Psalm of Life* and *Footsteps of Angels*, as may be seen in the first four lines from the latter poem:

When the hours of Day are numbered,
And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
To a holy, calm delight.

In Alfred Noyes' *Wireless*, the first four lines in each stanza are catalectic and the last two acatalectic. Of the two, the catalectic measure is the favored one in English poetry. It is solely em-

ployed in William Blake's *A Dream*; Tennyson's *Home they brought her warrior dead* and *Go not, happy day*; George Meredith's *The Woods of Westernmain*; and Jessie Pope's *Socks*.

Poets have achieved various effects with the trochaic form. The liquid sounds in Tennyson's musical lines linger in the mind:

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver,
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
—*The Lady of Shalott*

Poe achieves notable effects by a prevailingly trochaic measure in *The Bells*. The sound of the sleigh bells is unmistakable.

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars, that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;

The crispness of "tinkle," "oversprinkle," "twinkle," "icy," and "crystalline" lends an unforgettable effect. Notice, too, the happy motion which the last unaccented syllable in lines one, three, and four give to the stanza.

Humorous verse, with its light-hearted nature and its lively, carefree manner, finds it most advantageous to use the trochaic rhythm. Leigh Hunt uses it in his *Jenny Kiss'd Me*; likewise Robert Herrick in *Upon His Gray Hairs* and George Wither in *Shall I, Wasting in Despair*. James Whitcomb Riley's well-known *When the Frost Is on the Punkin* derives part of its wholesome good fun from its trochaic swing, as may be seen from the first four lines:

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;

On the other hand, we occasionally find hymns written in trochees. Famous examples are Charles Wesley's *Jesus, Lover of My Soul* and Augustus M. Toplady's *Rock of Ages*:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!

We have already observed that iambuses and trochees are often used in one and the same poem. The blending of these two meters accounts in part for the animation in Scott's *Hunting Song* and Shelley's *To a Skylark* and for the lilting fancy in Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

The next type of foot, the anapest (∪ ∪ -), consists of three syllables. The two unaccented syllables preceding the accented one tend to inject the idea of haste and action into whatever poems may employ anapests. The reader pauses on only one out of every three syllables, as in Byron's line:

The Assyrians came down like the wolf on the fold.

The adaptation of anapests for lighter moments and livelier action is all the more noticeable when we continue to read the first stanza of Lord Byron's *The Destruction of Sennacherib*:

The Assyrians came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

This is one of the few poems that uses a purely anapestic rhythm.

In English poetry the important thoughts are carried chiefly by accented syllables. Since the ratio of unaccented to accented syllables is two to one, there is great danger of anapestic poems becoming wordy. Even Swinburne himself could not avoid this fault. He achieved rare word music; but we sometimes wonder what he is singing about.

Some of the noteworthy examples of poems in the anapestic rhythm would include Byron's *Oh talk not to me*, from which we quote four lines:

▪

ERRATUM

For “Assyrians” in lines 16 and 20 on page 50
read “Assyrian.”

▪

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
 'Tis but as a dead-flower with May-dew besprinkled,
 Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
 What care I for the wreaths that can only give glory!

The lively fancy which characterizes the foregoing is likewise noticeable in the following from Sidney Lanier's *Song of the Chattahoochee*:

I hurry amain to reach the plain,
 Run the rapid and leap the fall,
 Split at the rock and together again,
 Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
 And flee from folly on every side
 With a lover's pain to attain the plain.

The care-free tumbling effect which is achieved by Lanier in the foregoing lines is partly due to the presence of anapests. The stanza is composed only partly of anapestic feet; but they are sufficient in number to hurry up, here and there, the reading so as to carry out the onward flow of the stream. The same combination of anapests with other feet is also used in Masfield's *Sea Fever*, Swinburne's *Hertha*, and in the two lines constituting Stevenson's *Happy Thought*:

The world is so full of a number of things,
 I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

The first foot in each line is an iambus.

The dactylic (— ∪ ∪) rhythm is desirable for speed and movement for the same reason as that given for the action in the anapestic. Dactylic verse is both triple and descending. It therefore has the difficulties of both the trochaic and the anapestic verse. For this reason dactylic verse is not popular. The lines in Swinburne's *The Song of the Standard* ends with an accented syllable, as the first stanza shows:

Maiden most beautiful, mother most bountiful, lady of lands,
 Queen and republican, crowned of the centuries whose years are
 thy sands,
 See for thy sake what we bring to thee, Italy, here in our hands.

Many poems alternate between a line which ends with a trochaic foot and one which ends with an accented syllable, as in Scott's *Boat Song* and Browning's *The Lost Leader*. The first four lines from the latter will illustrate this alternation:

Just for a handful of silver he left us;
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
 Lost all the others she lets us devote;

While the dactylic rhythm is most suitable for themes of a less serious nature, still in Hood's *The Bridge of Sighs* we have a unique example of a light dactylic measure in the service of a serious theme:

One more unfortunate,
 Weary of breath,
 Rashly importunate,
 Gone to her death!
 Take her up tenderly,
 Lift her with care;
 Fashioned so slenderly,
 Young and so fair!

This illustrates the difficulty of determining just what proportion of the effect of a poem is governed by meter. In this poem the lightly skipping rhythm seems to add to the gloom of the situation by its dactylic sway, until, by repetition, the spirit is made heavy by the unfortunate death.

The dactylic foot appears in combination with other feet. The union of the anapests and the dactyls, for example, has resulted in such poems as Browning's *Evelyn Hope* and *Prospice*, Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*, and Frost's *The Road Not Taken*.

LINE

Now that we have summarized the most important of the metrical feet which appear in English poetry, let us examine a larger unit of poetry, namely, the *line* or *verse*. A line is composed of a number of feet, arranged in sequence. Four iambic feet appear in sequence in John Burrough's *Waiting*:

Serene, I fold my hands and wait.

The name given to this line is iambic tetrameter; that is, we name the kind of foot and the kind of line. When we thus determine the type of foot and line for any poem, we are said to *scan* the line. The noun is *scansion*.

The number of accented syllables determines the number of feet in a line. Thus in Stevenson's

The world is so full of a number of things,

there are eleven syllables and four feet; whereas in James Thomson's

The moving moon and stars from east to west,

there are only ten syllables but five feet.

In English poetry lines vary in length from one to nine feet. To each of these a name has been given. A one-foot line is called a *monometer* line. Poems in this meter are rare. Herrick's *Upon His Departure Hence* is the most famous:

Thus I
Passe by,
And die:

As one
Unknown,
And gone.

I'm made
A shade,
And laid

I' th' grave:
There have
My Cave.

Where tell
I dwell,
Farewell.

Others such as Frank Sidgwick's *The Aëronaut to His Lady* have also been written. This latter poem is especially interesting in that it employs only one word to the line:

I
Through
Blue
Sky
Fly
To
You
Why?
etc.

Monometer lines generally appear as variants in poems. In Browning's *Love Among the Ruins*, the amphimacer foot (- u -), used in every alternate line, together with the end rhymes, gives an effect of distant echo:

But he looked upon the city, every *side*,
 Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples all the *glades*'
 Colonnades,
All the causeways, bridges, aqueducts,—and *then*,
 All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will *stand*,
 Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first *embrace*
 Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and *speech*
 Each on each.

In Holmes' *The Last Leaf* the monometer line which appears in every third line adds a reflective element to the poem; for these short lines produce a sort of lull by taking our memories back to some past event:

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
 In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
 On the tomb.

The *dimeter*, or two-foot line, is by its very nature a more possible medium for the poet's thoughts. While poems in the *dimeter* meter are comparatively few, still a number have won

a permanent place in literature. Blake uses iambs and anapests in his *Mad Song*:

Like a fiend in a cloud
 With howling woe
 After night I do crowd
 And with night will go;

Hood's *The Bridge of Sighs*, Browning's *The Year's at the Spring*, Poe's *For Annie*, and William H. Davies' *The Muse* are also written in this meter. The simplicity of Davies' foregoing poem is especially delightful, as the first stanza shows:

I have no ale,
 No wine I want;
 No ornaments,
 My meat is scant.

The three-foot line, or *trimeter*, is clearly illustrated in a few lines from Smith's anthem:

My country 'tis of Thee
 Sweet land of liberty.

The trimeter foot is used in Hood's *The Song of the Shirt*, Freneau's *Ode*, Longfellow's *A Ballad of the French Fleet*, Arnold's *Requiescat*, Rossetti's *Three Shadows*, and Robert Bridges' *Moonlight*. In Browning's *A Woman's Last Word* trimeter and monometer lines are used alternately:

Where the apple reddens
 Never pry—
 Lest we lose our Edens,
 Eve and I.

One of the most popular lines is the four-foot or *tetrameter* line, illustrated in John McCrae's well-known poem, beginning

In Flanders fields the poppies blow.

The tetrameter line, using the iambic foot, is often called by the name of *octosyllabic* (eight syllables). The tetrameter rhythm

dominates the Popular ballads. Scott used it in his best metrical romances, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and *The Lady of the Lake*; Burns in his songs; and Tennyson in his *In Memoriam*. In American literature the tetrameter was a favorite measure with Freneau, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, and others.

The tetrameter line is often used with other types of lines in the same poem. Thackeray, for example, uses the tetrameter and dimeter lines in *At the Church Gate*, Rossetti the tetrameter and trimeter in *The King's Tragedy*, as does also Emily Dickinson in *I Never Saw a Moor*:

~ — / ~ — / ~ —
 I never saw a moor,
 ~ — / ~ — / ~ —
 I never saw the sea;
 ~ — / ~ — / ~ — / ~ —
 Yet know I how the heather looks,
 ~ — / ~ — / ~ — / ~ —
 And what a wave must be.

The *pentameter*, or five-foot line, as illustrated in

~ — / ~ — / ~ — / ~ — / ~ —
 The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

is the most important line in English poetry. Chaucer used it in *The Canterbury Tales*, Spenser in *The Faerie Queene*, Milton in his *Paradise Lost*, Pope in *The Rape of the Lock*, Byron in *The Vision of Judgment*, Browning in *The Ring and the Book*, and William Morris in *The Earthly Paradise*. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson wrote their matchless dramas in this form. The pentameter meter is commonly employed in narrative, dramatic, descriptive, and reflective poetry. It is used exclusively in the sonnets; and most of the epics are written in this measure.

That type of verse which we call *blank verse* is usually written in iambic pentameter lines. A very good example is found in Tennyson's *Ulysses*:

. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

The end words, as you will observe, do not rhyme in what we commonly designate as blank verse.

The *hexameter* (six-feet), *heptameter* (seven-feet), *octometer* (eight-feet), and the *nonameter* (nine-feet) lines are seldom used. Swinburne's *The Song of the Standard* is in the hexameter meter, as is Tennyson's *The Revenge*:

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we roared a hurrah, and so
 The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe.

The heptameter line is used by Whittier in *Massachusetts to Virginia*, by Bayard Taylor in *The Quaker Widow*, and by Rudyard Kipling in *The Ballad of East and West*:

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
 Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;

The octometer rhythm appears in such poems as Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, Longfellow's *Nuremberg*, Riley's *When the Frost Is on the Punkin*, and Van Dyke's *Tennyson*. One line from the latter poem will illustrate:

From the misty shores of midnight, touched with splendors of
 the moon.

The nonameter line is a curiosity more than anything else. Tennyson used it capably in *To Virgil*, the first line of which poem follows:

Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,

RHYME

Various kinds of feet and lines are not the only mechanical qualities which we may observe in poetry. Rhyme (or rime) accounts in part for the effect which certain poems produce upon the reader. Most English poems have rhyme. When similar sounds in the final syllables of words are repeated at regular intervals, as in Shelley's *The Cloud*, we give to this characteristic the name of *rhyme*:

I sift the *snow* on the mountain *below*,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
 And all the *night* 'tis my pillow *white*,
 While I sleep in the arms of the *blast*.
 Sublime on the *towers* of my skiey *bowers*,
 Lightning my pilot *sits*;
 In the cavern *under* is fettered the *thunder*,—
 It struggles and howls at *fits*;

In the foregoing poem, *aghast* at the end of the second line rhymes with *blast* at the end of the fourth line; and *sits* at the end of line six with *fits* at the end of the last line. This is called *end-rhyme*. Sometimes a word in the middle of the line is made to rhyme with one at the end of the line, as in *snow—below*, *night—white*, *towers—bowers*, and *under—thunder*. We call this type of rhyme *internal rhyme*. These internal rhymes heighten the pleasure by contributing to the general melody, and by exciting and satisfying in turn, the reader's love for similar sound recurrences at stated intervals. The pleasure derived from the end rhymes *aghast—blast* and *sits—fits* is similar to the foregoing, the only difference being the longer rhyme intervals.

When the words rhyme in one syllable only, as in *aghast* and *blast*, we call it a *masculine rhyme*; and when two syllables rhyme, as in *under* and *thunder*, the term *feminine rhyme* is used.

Sometimes, as in Hood's

Take her up *tenderly*,
 Lift her with care;
 Fashioned so *slenderly*,
 Young and so fair!

words rhyme in three syllables. Words that are spelled differently, but rhyme in sound, as in Tennyson's

Thou madest man, he knows not *why*,
He thinks he was not made to *die*,

or in Emerson's

The Sphinx is drowsy,
Her wings are *furled*:
Her ear is heavy,
She broods on the *world*,

are called *ear-rhymes*. They rhyme according to the ear but not according to the eye. In contrast to *ear-rhymes* are the so-called *eye-rhymes* which are spelled similarly but pronounced differently, as in Moody's

And of these hearts my heart was *one*:
Nor when beneath the arch of *stone* . . .

These rhymes have the sanction of the eye, but not of the ear.

End-rhymes are used in various ways. Throughout this book we shall use the letters of the alphabet as convenient labels for various rhyme sounds. Thus in Meredith's *The Lark Ascending*,

But wider over many <i>heads</i>	a
The starry voice ascending <i>spreads</i> ,	a
Awakening, as it waxes <i>thin</i> ,	b
The best in us to him <i>akin</i> ,	b

the rhyme is *a-a-b-b*. The most popular rhyme scheme is the alternate *a-b-a-b*, as illustrated in the following lines from Moore's *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*:

The harp that once through Tara's <i>halls</i>	a
The soul of music <i>shed</i> ,	b
Now hangs as mute on Tara's <i>walls</i>	a
As if that soul were <i>fled</i> .	b

Closely akin to the foregoing rhyme arrangement is that found in such poems as Bryant's *A Lifetime*,

I sit in the early twilight,	a
And, through the gathering <i>shade</i> ,	b
I look on the fields around me	c
Where yet a child I <i>played</i> ,	b

where only the second and fourth lines in each stanza rhyme. Less popular than the foregoing is the *a-a-b-b* rhyme, as exemplified in Bryant's *O Fairest of the Rural Maids*:

O fairest of the rural <i>maids</i> !	a
Thy birth was in the forest <i>shades</i> ;	a
Green boughs, and glimpses of the <i>sky</i> ,	b
Where all that met thine infant <i>eye</i> .	b

These foregoing rhyme schemes are those most commonly used in the four-line stanza. There are many other less popular types of stanzas and, accordingly, numerous other rhyme schemes which we shall present in subsequent discussions throughout this book.

Rhymes make several very definite contributions to poetry. In the first place, they enhance the music of poems. Furthermore, rhymes introduce an element of suspense. In poems of a humorous nature this is especially noticeable, where unlooked-for revelations come with end-rhyming words, as in the anonymous *The Modern Belle*:

She falls in love with a fellow
Who swells with a foreign <i>air</i> ;
He marries her for her money,
She marries him for his <i>hair</i> !
One of the very best matches,—
Both are well-mated in <i>life</i> ;
She's got a fool for a husband,
He's got a fool for a <i>wife</i> !

The element of expectancy is also clearly discernible in limericks, where the chief pleasure consists in the final humorous twist which comes with the end-rhyming word in the fifth line, as in

As a beauty I am not a star,
There are others more handsome by far;
But my face I don't mind it,
For I am behind it,
It's the people in front get the <i>jar</i> !

In addition to the two foregoing pleasures which rhyme makes possible in poetry is the unifying element which it introduces. Rhyme aids in tying together the various units which constitute a poem. There is a general tendency among poets to enclose a new but related thought within each additional rhyming unit. This makes for clarity and beauty—beauty because the artist's mechanical pattern can be more readily comprehended by the average reader.

SOUNDS OF WORDS

Closely akin to the consideration of rhyme is the recognition of the part that sounds of words, other than rhymes, play in poetic compositions. Sometimes in words closely succeeding each other, as in Swinburne's

The *lilies* and *languors* of *virtue*
And the *raptures* and *roses* of *vice*,

or in Browning's

Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,

there is a repetition of the initial sound, in *lilies* and *languors* or *raptures* and *roses*. This succession of similar consonants is called *alliteration*. Again, the same vowel sound, other than in end words, may recur within a line or sequence of lines, as in Tennyson's

And *round* about the *prow* she wrote.

This resemblance of sound is termed *assonance*.

Sounds of words play another important role in verse, that of imitating the sound of the object which they name, as in Tennyson's line,

The palace *banged*, and *buzzed* and *clackt*.

The words *burly* and *dozing* are especially suggestive of the bee in Emerson's,

Burly, dozing humble-bee.

The use of such words adds *tone color* to poetry. The poet aims to suggest the sense in sound, that is to wed sense and sound. This adaptation of words to sound we call *onomatopoeia*; the

adjective form may be either *onomatopoeic* or *onomatopoetic*. The latent power in Tennyson's *The Bugle Song* is to be found largely in its onomatopoeic melody. We can hear the bugles blowing in

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow bugle;

In our mind's ear the martial notes are fading in the distance
as we stand with the poet on Lake Killarney, in

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!

Blow, bugle, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

Although poetry is read by means of the eye, it is really absorbed and tested by the ear. Whether or not the poet has succeeded in joining letter-sounds successfully is primarily for the ear to judge. The vowel sounds are sufficiently varied as to enable the poet to select those which will best aid him in conveying the meaning and mood he has in mind. Some vowels and diphthongs are long, like *a* in *gate*, *e* in *feet*, *i* in *fire*, *o* in *low*, and *ea* in *dream*. The long vowels are adapted for a quiet, slow, reflective mood, like that to be found in Gray's

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea...

Other vowels are short, like *cat*, *wet*, *fir*, *lot*, and are selected by poets for lighter and more rapid effects, as in Tennyson's

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Again, some vowels are naturally of higher pitch than others. Words like *hate*, *high*, *get*, *out*, for example, are pitched higher than *awe*, *sow*, *use*, and *gray*. Contrast the high-pitched vowels in Browning's

Not *see*? because of night perhaps?—why *day*
Came back again for *that*! *before* it left,
The dying sunset *kindled* through a *cleft*...

with the low-pitched vowels in Tennyson's

Lead out the pageant: *sad* and *slow*,
As fits an universal *woe*,
Let the *long, long* procession *go*,
And let the *sorrowing* crowd about it *grow*,
And let the *mournful* martial music *blow*;
The last great Englishman is *low*.

You will note that the first excerpt is more spirited and more active than the second. The open vowels retard the movement in Tennyson's lines and add solemnity and gloom. In Keats's

The *weariness*, the fever, and fret
Here where men sit and *hear* each other groan.

the repetition of certain vowel-sounds in the same line or lines in sequence brings a certain appropriate monotony to these lines.

The discriminating poet will give attention not only to vowel effects, but also to the various sounds of consonants. There is the hissing sound in the sibilants *c, s, f, v, z, sh, th, wh, ch*, and *j* (*knife, dice, buzz, doze, slush, pinch, ninth, kiss, whistle*). The sound of the spirants is smoother and more continuous: *f* in *leaf*, *s* in *still*, *sh* in *shower*, and *v* in *leave*. The liquids, *l, m, n, r, ng*, may be prolonged in sound and so have a tendency to tie together words in a line. The *r*'s and *l*'s aid in giving the sense of moving water in Elizabeth B. Browning's *A Musical Instrument*:

The limpid water turbidly ran,

While turbidly flowed the river

The consonants commonly called *stops* aid the poet in obtaining effects of abruptness, roughness, percussion, and explosion. Consider the rough and explosive effect of the *k* sounds in Tennyson's

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;

or listen to the percussive sounds of *b* and *t* in Arnold's

Hark! ah, the nightingale
The tawney-throated

Hark! from the moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!

The stops include, *b, d, g, k, p, t, c* (hard), *ch* (hard), *q*, and *x*.

The letters of our alphabet, then, present to the poet a whole gamut of sounds, from which he may select those which best serve his purpose. There are sounds of the vowels, from the resonant and vibrating *oh* and *ah* to the short, terse *got* and *hat*. Among the consonants are the soft liquid murmur of *lull*, the throat and palatal murmur of *gum*, the soft explosion of *chin* and *tatter*, the soft blowing sound of *sheet*, the soft hissing of *sister*, the soft puffing of *purple*, the hard murmured hissing of *verve* and *vivid*, the soft singing of *noon* and *near*, and the nasalized singing of *rang* and *flung*. From these and many other sounds the poet selects those which meet the desired sound effects. If he selects well, the result is a harmonious blending of sounds, each helping the poet to convey to the reader a particular shade of meaning and quality of emotion.

STANZA

From very early times poets have divided their poems into groups of lines, each group constituting a thought or metrical (or both) unit. The term stanza is given to such a unit. The number of lines which constitute a stanza varies greatly in number. There is the two-line stanza which Whittier employed in *Maud Muller* and *Barbara Frietchie*, and Bliss Carman in *The Joys of the Road*. The first stanza from the latter poem,

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hardwood trees,

illustrates the usual end-rhyme (a-a) to be found in this short stanza. The term *couplet* is applied, not only to two-line stanzas, but also to any two successive lines of poetry which rhyme, whether they constitute by themselves a separate stanza or not, as in Pope's

Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day.

When, as in the foregoing lines, the two rhyming lines have an iambic pentameter meter, we give to them the name of *heroic*

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill	d
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)	e
With living hues and odors plain and hill;	d

Four-line stanzas, or *quatrains*, are the most common of all stanzaic form. As has already been pointed out, the a-b-a-b rhyme is the most popular. The forms a-a-b-b, a-b-b-a, a-b-c-b, a-a-a-a, and a-a-b-a are also used. The so-called ballad meter consists of four-line stanzas in which lines one and three are tetrameters and two and four are trimeters.

Stanzas of five, six, and seven lines are not so common as the quatrains. John Freeman, a poet of the World War, uses five-line stanzas of an a-b-c-d-d rhyme in his famous *English Hills*. The seven-line stanza is used in Southey's *The Battle of Blenheim*, Poe's *The Raven*, and Amy Lowell's *The Book of Hours of Sister Clotilde*. Thomas W. Parsons's *Dirge*, Edmund C. Stedman's *How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry*, and George Meredith's *The Old Chartist* are all written in seven-line stanzas. The so-called *rhyme royal* stanza is composed of seven iambic pentameter lines, rhyming a-b-a-b-b-c-c. Morris, as well as Shakespeare and Masfield, used this form of stanza. The following lines from one of Morris' poems illustrate the *rhyme royal*:

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

- ▲ Stanzas of eight lines appear more frequently than do those of five, six, or seven lines. Good examples are to be found in Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*, Aldrich's *Prescience*, and Robinson's *Flammonde*. The type of eight-line stanza, known as the *ottava rima*, has an iambic pentameter rhythm and a rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c. In such satiric poems as Byron's *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, ottava rima is found to be a suitable medium. The couplet at the close of each eight-line group has a clapper-like effect, carrying in its lines a cumulative thrust:

What is the end of fame 'tis but to fill

A certain portion of uncertain paper:

Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
 Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour;
 For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
 And bards turn what they call their 'midnight taper',
 To have, when the original is dust,
 A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

—Don Juan

The nine-line stanza is important because it includes the well-known *Spenserian Stanza*. Although Keats and Byron used this form, we naturally turn to Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* for an example. Here the Spenserian stanzas follow one another as tide follows tide on a summer sea. The music unrolls smoothly, the musician sending forth his notes with clarity and grace. The instrument breathes as one with the master:

Exceeding shoen, like Phoebus fayrest childe,
 That did presume his fathers fyrie wayne,
 And flaming mouthes of steedes, unwonted wilde,
 Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rayne:
 Proud of such glory and advancement wayne,
 While flashing beames do daze his feeble eyen,
 He leaves the welkin way most beaten playne,
 And, rapt with whirling wheels, inflames the skyen
 With fire not made to burn, but fayrely for to shvne.

As may be gleaned from the foregoing, the stanza contains nine iambic lines, the first eight of five feet and the last (called *Alexandrine*) of six feet in length. The rhyme is *a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c-c*. Nine-line stanzas, other than the *Spenserian Stanza*, are of course used by such poets as Poe in *Ulalume* and by Moody in *Gloucester Moors*.

Stanzas of more than nine lines are frequently used by poets. Ten-line stanzas, for example, appear in Aldrich's *Palabras Cariñosas*, thirteen lines to the stanza in Stoddard's *Imogen*, and sixteen in Frank D. Sherman's *A Rhyme for Priscilla*.

IRREGULAR FORMS

In our foregoing discussions of feet, lines, and stanzas we did not wish to imply that a strict metrical regularity is always essential to superb word music; for in that case we should have

to eliminate such an exquisite example as Shakespeare's *Who Is Silvia?*:

Who is Silvia? What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heavens such grace did lend her
That she might admired be.

Ben Jonson likewise ignores regular structure in *Simplex Mundiis*:

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed;
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

The poet, then, may depart from metrical regularity and achieve notable artistic results. He is not a slave to form; he sets all accepted standards at naught if they conflict with his own inner feeling. He combines as he will. All that we may ask is that he achieve some desired artistic result.

Poetry often gains by being cast into an irregular mold. Variations in rhyme and meter are advantageously employed by Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Tennyson, Rossetti, Arnold, and Swinburne. The variations, however, are usually subtle, as in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and Browning's *The Year's at the Spring*. When we consider the many possible metrical combinations which the poet may employ, of the richness and extent of the English vocabulary where armies of words wait to do the author's bidding, it is apparent why the resources of the poet can never be exhausted. As we review all these elements that go to make a poem, it is clear that in the final analysis, it is the mental and emotional warmth of the poet's nature that melts ideas, words, rhymes, and meters into one immortal substance.

QUESTIONS

1. Give a name, wherever possible, to the verse form (such as Trochaic Tetrameter, Anapestic Trimeter, etc.) used in the following poems:

Edmund Waller: *On a Girdle*

John Milton: *On Shakespeare*

William Cowper: *On the Loss of the Royal George*

William Blake: *The Piper*

Sir Walter Scott: *Soldier, Rest!*

Percy Bysshe Shelley: *To*—(One word is too often profaned)

Robert Browning: *The Year's at the Spring*

John Freeman: *English Hills*

John Keats: *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern*

Charles Wolfe: *The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna*

Rudyard Kipling: *The Ballad of East and West*

Edgar Allan Poe: *The Raven*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: *Evangeline*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *The Oak*

The Snowdrop

The Throstle

Algernon Charles Swinburne: *A Forsaken Garden*

To Walt Whitman in America

Lord Byron: *Stanzas for Music*

2. Note examples of onomatopoeia in the following poems:

Robert Browning: *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *The Lotus Eaters*

The Bugle Song

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington

Edgar Allan Poe: *Ulalume*

Vachel Lindsay: *The Congo*

Alfred Noyes: *The Highwayman*

Thomas Gray: *Elegy*

3. Make a study of the rhymes and rhyme schemes in the following:

Anonymous: *The Wife of Usher's Well*

Sir Thomas Wyatt: *Forget Not Yet*

An Earnest Suit

Sir Edward Dyer: *My Mind To Me a Kingdom Is*

Robert Greene: *Philomela's Ode*

Robert Frost: *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

Robert Herrick: *To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time To Music*

*A Bacchanalian Verse*Andrew Marvell: *Horatian Ode*John Milton: *Il Penseroso*Thomas Gray: *Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat*Lord Byron: *When We Two Parted*Percy Bysshe Shelley: *To a Skylark*Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *The Lady of Shalott*Edgar Allan Poe: *Ulalume*Robert Browning: *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *Troy Town*Algernon Charles Swinburne: *A Match**A Garden of Proserpine*

4. What kinds of stanzas are used in these poems?

James Thomson: *The Castle of Indolence*Robert Burns: *The Cotter's Saturday Night*William Wordsworth: *Ode to Duty*Lord Byron: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage**Don Juan*Percy Bysshe Shelley: *Adonais**Ode to the West Wind*John Masefield: *The Widow in the Bye Street*Robert Browning: *The Statue and the Bust**A Toccata of Galuppi's*William Morris: *The Defense of Guinevere*

5. Consider the vowel and the consonant sounds in each of the following poems:

Frederick Locker-Lampson: *My Mistress's Boots*Percy Bysshe Shelley: *Indian Serenade*Matthew Arnold: *The Forsaken Merman*Thomas Hood: *The Song of the Shirt*George Meredith: *The Lark Ascending*Robert Bridges: *My Delight and Thy Delight*John Masefield: *A Consecration*

CHAPTER III

NARRATIVE POETRY

POETRY is commonly divided into three classes, *narrative*, *lyric*, and *dramatic*. In narrative poetry the poet relates a story from a spectator's point of view. Lyric poetry furnishes a medium whereby the poet may express his own thoughts and feelings. In dramatic poetry the characters in the drama act and speak for themselves without any interpolated comment by the poet. These three general divisions of poetry have interested poets from the very earliest times. Each type has its distinctive appeal and its characteristic way of rendering human experience for man's benefit and enjoyment.

HISTORY

In almost every age and country there have been poets who could tell stories superbly. In fact human beings told stories in verse long before they thought of doing so in prose. In much of the world's early poetry the narrative element frequently appears side by side with lyricism, as in Psalms 78, 105, and 106 of Hebrew poetry. The narrative verse element, employed very early by the Greek and Hebrew poets, has been used in subsequent centuries, and became a medium for immortalized creations in the hands of such incomparable narrators as Vergil, Dante, Tasso, Camoens, Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Goethe. Some of the world's greatest poetic masterpieces fall into the class of narrative poetry.

In England, various extant narrative poems, such as *Widsith* and *Beowulf*, appeared before the Normans came in 1066. It was, however, during the four centuries following the Norman Conquest that the demand for entertainment in the form of stories became so persistent and widespread that thousands of narrative pieces such as romances, tales, and ballads sprang into being. This period also gave birth to Chaucer and his inimitable

Canterbury Tales. In England the drama began to supersede narrative poetry in the latter part of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century; but narrative verse was still accounted of such importance in the day of Shakespeare as to induce this dramatist to neglect that which the world now treasures—the manuscript of his plays—and to revise carefully his two narratives, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. During Shakespeare's lifetime Edmund Spenser composed his masterpiece, *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1596), a narrative presenting a series of fairylike, chivalric pageants. Over half a century later, between 1667-1671, John Milton gave to seventeenth century England his great pair of epics, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

Already in the closing decades of the seventeenth century the forces that were to determine the course of eighteenth century poetry were discernible. Those writers who were to usher in the new age came to look with disfavor upon the license and exuberance of the preceding period and to welcome instead a poetry which should deal formally and intelligently with the life and interests common to cultivated men. Poise, finish, and logic were sought rather than passion, enthusiasm, and imagination. The ideals of the new period were practical and conventional—an age of rules and reason. The greater part of the eighteenth century was therefore not friendly to narrative poetry of the fervid or stimulating variety. Love and all her ardent retinue were disenthroned for a time. Pope, the dominating figure of the early years of the century, was practically the only one to make noteworthy contributions. His mock-heroic *The Rape of the Lock* (1712) and semi-romantic *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717), together with his translations of the *Iliad* (1715-1720) and the *Odyssey* (1726) are the chief surviving works for the first fifty years of the century. Although by 1750 the poetry was beginning to show the influence of new tastes, it was not until the close of the century that these new inclinations became embodied in distinguished narrative verse.

With the approach of the eighteenth century, therefore, narrative poetry developed along a new line. Up to 1800, let us say, the poetic molds for English writers were rather definitely formed. The poets and the prose writers kept lyric and narrative poetry, history, biography, the essay, drama, and prose fiction

strictly in their respective compartments. Then came an important war in France which affected English letters. The ideas of freedom and the unbounded interest in man which accompanied the French Revolution of 1789-1802 influenced English thought and life, and, needless to say, the writers of the time. The hitherto thwarted imagination of English poetry was given free play, and a new movement was inaugurated. In narrative poetry a sharp individualism in thought and form was the direct result of this new energy. The barriers which formerly separated the various types were broken down; and the poet felt at liberty to do with each literary type as he pleased, even though that might mean the combining of two or more distinct forms within a single poem.

The approach of this new liberalism in poetry was already noticeable as early as 1765 with the revival of interest in the ballad, as instanced in the publication in that year of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Later on the humor and broad humanity which shone forth in Cowper's *John Gilpin* (1782) and Burns' *Tam O' Shanter* (1791) were likewise heralds of a new day in poetry. But the distinction of enlarging very definitely the scope of narrative verse, both in theme and technique, fell to Wordsworth. We have a new simplicity in his pastoral poem, *Michael* (1800) and a revival of the classical in his *Laodamia* (1814). In *The Ancient Mariner* (1797) Coleridge made unforgettable a poem with a supernatural background. Sir Walter Scott introduced stories of romance in such poems as *Marmion* (1808) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810); while Byron made popular a type of melodramatic and passionate romance in *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), and others. Before the nineteenth century passed its second decade Keats had also contributed the medieval *The Eve of St. Agnes* (1820) and *Lamia* (1820) to the list of narratives which belong to the Romantic era.

During the seventy-odd remaining years of the nineteenth century English literature was enormously enriched by such contributions as Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Browning's *Hervé Riel*, Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, Rossetti's *The King's Tragedy* and *Sister Helen*, Morris' *The Life and Death of Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise*, and Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse* and *The Tale of Balen* (1896). Space does not permit a men-

tion of other poems of this century which also occupy worthy places in the realm of narrative verse. Nor are we permitted a discussion of the new forms and principles which the poets of this century introduced into the field of narrative technique. Profiting by their predecessors' experiments, the poets of the Romantic (1798-1832) and Victorian (1832-1892) eras evolved a more versatile narrative form, which often incorporates some lyrical and dramatic qualities. For this reason their narrative poems can be classified more satisfactorily by their subject matter than by their literary form. When we examine the major narrative writers, we find them dominated by two chief interests. The one group was stimulated by the past, and derived their themes from the mythology, sagas, and folklore of medieval times. Their narratives are characterized by mysticism and a dreamy supernaturalism. The incidents they relate are often surcharged with an imaginative and highly emotional sense which so naturally goes hand in hand with antiquarian subjects. In this group of writers are to be found Scott, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Morris, Rossetti, and Swinburne.

The other group of poets found their subjects in the everyday life about them. They saw limitless possibilities in the scenes and incidents of their own day. Tragedies were enacted before their very eyes. What need was there to look elsewhere? The stories coming from writers with such a creed were certain to be realistic. In this class might be mentioned such men as Wordsworth, Browning, Hardy, Kipling, and Masfield.

CHARACTERISTICS

Beginning in 1740 with Samuel Richardson's novel, *Pamela*, interest in prose narrative gradually increased until in the twentieth century it is infinitely more popular than verse narrative. We can, in part, account for this on the basis of technique. Prose can employ dialogue more advantageously—an important factor in great novels. Prose narrative is, furthermore, free from the greater rigidity of mechanical form which is imposed upon poetry. Prose has, for example, no iambics and tetrameters with which to hamper its novelists. For this reason prose narrative is less likely to suffer from the extravagances which the poetic

form invites, such as figures, conceits, inversions, etc. This is perhaps the reason why the highways of English and American literatures are strewn with colossal failures in metrical narratives. In England, Chamberlayne's *Pharonnida*, Davenant's *Gondibert*, Blackmore's *King Arthur*, and in America, Barlow's *Columbiad* were written at a great cost in time and labor; but who now reads any one of them? The verse form places in the hands of the author a potential force which is at once powerful and dangerous. It releases narrative energies which only the man of genius can properly utilize. The elements of digression, characterization, didacticism, rhyme, rhythm, imagery, and emotionalism must be so deftly handled that the poetic medium will be felt to enhance the story and to be both a pleasing and inevitable vehicle in the relating of the given episode. For this reason our Chaucers, Spensers, Scotts, Morrisises, and Masefields are very rare.

Verse narrative has, however, a domain which is uniquely its own. As a rule, a narrative poem can more readily absorb the reader's interest if it is briefly, racily, and emotionally written, as is Stevenson's *Heather Ale* or Burns' *Tam O' Shanter*. The modern narrative poem succeeds best when it is something more than a story of an action, a description of a scene, or an objective meditation upon a theme. The temperament and feelings of a poet should show through his story, that is they should impress themselves inconspicuously upon the reader. The manner of telling his story, of presenting its characters, of arranging the episodes, and of leading the reader to a subconscious application of the fictitious experience are the factors necessary in setting the narrative art on its highest pedestal. The chief attraction, then, in narrative poetry is the ever unfathomable mind of the narrator. This is true of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and of Wordsworth's *Michael*. A narrative must link itself with the deeper significance of human life if it is to be more than a shallow entertainment.

When we consider narrative poetry and lyric poetry, the impersonal quality of the former is of course the chief differentiating characteristic. Though the mind of the author invests the story with life and individuality, it is in the background, always wary of diverting the attention of the reader from the story itself.

It thus happens that the first person is rarely used in narrative poetry, Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon* and Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner* being among the exceptions. The author does not obtrude; he directs our attention, not to himself, but to others. It remains that if a poet would write narrative verse of a superior order, he must have a highly finished verse structure, a gripping story, and must permit his own personality to peep through.

All poetry may be said to contain a lyrical element to a greater or lesser extent. In certain poems both the narrative and lyric notes are so conspicuous as to make assignment to a definite class a difficult, if not a disadvantageous task. In the bride's idyllic reminiscences of a happy dream in *The Song of Solomon* the portrayal of passionate love was the poet's purpose; and yet he chose to present it through the narrative medium:

By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth:
 I sought him, but found him not.
 I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,
 In the streets and in the broad ways,
 I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
 I sought him, but I found him not.

The watchmen that go about the city found me:
 To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
 It was but a little that I passed from them,
 When I found him whom my soul loveth:
 I held him, and would not let him go,
 Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
 And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

(from Moulton's *The Modern Reader's Bible*)

In the *National Hymn of the Wilderness* (Psalm 136), we find a ballad-like rhythm in the service of lyrical song:

To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn:
 For his mercy endureth for ever:
 And brought out Israel from among them:
 For his mercy endureth for ever:
 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm:
 For his mercy endureth for ever:

To him which divided the Red Sea in sunder:
For his mercy endureth for ever:
And made Israel to pass through the midst of it:
For his mercy endureth for ever:
But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea:
For his mercy endureth for ever.

(From Moulton's *The Modern Reader's Bible*)

The combination of narrative and lyrical elements is to be observed in Burns' *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. The greater part of the poem is given to a descriptive narrative of the "homely joys" of the Scotch peasant, of which the following is typical:

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears.

In strong contrast to the foregoing objective picture stand out the seven lyrical stanzas, culminating in the patriotic outburst:

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
'An honest man's the noblest work of God: etc.

Though in this poem the narrative lines exceed the lyric in number, they are subordinate to the lyric in motive and feeling, and the poem is predominantly a lyric.

Countless other examples of a mixture of forms are not wanting. The description of the pilgrims in Chaucer's *Prologue* to his *Canterbury Tales* goes hand in hand with a faint narrative element. In Pope's *Essay on Man* a narrative vessel holds, as it were, the observations on life in general. The reflective and descriptive treatment of the village and its inhabitants in Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* likewise depends upon a narrative element for its sequence and unity. In Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* the narrative thread aids, though faintly, in holding together the various reflections about the scenes which the poet reviews. Byron's ideas about persons and places in *Childe Harold* are set in a narrative mold. The dramatic, lyric, and narrative influences are all felt in Browning's *A Grammarian's Funeral*,

Porphyria's Lover, and *My Last Duchess*. Whether or not, then, we classify a poem as narrative, lyric, or dramatic depends upon the poet's organization of his theme and upon the prevailing motive. When his purpose is mainly that of telling a story, whatever the nature of his digressions may be, the result is a narrative poem.

Down through the centuries narrative poetry has claimed an innumerable host of readers. We need not seek far for an explanation of this continued interest. First of all, there is the craving for experience with people and nature. It is fortunate that narrative poetry affords us the opportunity of living through so many experiences by proxy. That we may pass through the agonies or felicities of a leading character without paying the penalties makes for great economy in life. We profit by their experiences. With the fictitious characters we pass through experiences in a dual sense; we are interested in their well-being and indirectly in our own. Our personal safety is normally an ever engaging thought. Narrative verse lays before us, panoramically, the various scenes of the world; it shows us men and women in action, the breadth and depth of their social natures. The many-sided aspects of life we may compress into a short period of reading. In contrast to lyrical verse, poetic narrative measures out experiences extensively rather than intensively. It provokes reflection, and historically and ideally introduces the individual into the world life of man. By means of narrative poetry the flesh and blood of humanity is more vitally distinguishable than through the less impassioned historical treatises. Chaucer's affable *Canterbury Tales* is a veritable storehouse of experiences of all kinds. If a cross section of society is anywhere to be found, it is in these very human tales. In Wordsworth's *Michael* we see enacted a tragedy which cannot but awaken the filial instincts in every reader. In Rossetti's *The King's Tragedy*, King James of Scotland is given more human proportions than any purely expository account could hope to do. In Hardy's *Satires of Circumstance* the unrelenting fate that metes out the destinies of man is ironically intimated with telling brevity.

Among the multitudinous experiences of life, none is so perpetually absorbing as that of observing personality. It is the one interest of which man will never tire; for, like the leaves on the trees, no two people are alike. It is this factor, above all,

that accounts for the popularity of both prose and poetic narratives. Morris' *The Defense of Guenevere* is most interesting in its revelation of Queen Guenevere's mind. Robinson's narrative character sketch of *Miniver Cheevy* centers about the futile thinking of Cheevy, which ended in mere thought instead of action. In a singularly engaging manner Robert Frost paints the picture of an old hired man in *The Death of the Hired Man*.

In our craving for experience, we face sooner or later the necessity of evaluating the world of nature. We are of its substance and the children of its laws. In narrative poetry we may observe man living in its mysterious realm, seeking to establish harmony between himself and nature's immutable mandates. If we read aright, the whole cycle of man's experience with nature is outlined, though in an emotional and imaginative language. The freshness of the outdoors is invigorating in the old cycle of ballads, *The Gest of Robin Hood*. Longfellow brings us into close contact with the various moods of the forest and seasons in *Hiawatha*—their blasting as well as their healing aspects. No poet has portrayed nature more intimately than Wordsworth. *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* are, as it were, journals which register the poet's introduction to life and the growth of his soul in contact with nature. Wordsworth went to nature for an unchanging scale with which he could measure his own life. Now as never before man needs to reflect upon the immensity of the mountain and of the ocean, the perennial awakening of fibrous life, the unfathomable recesses of air and sky. For a sympathetic observer, the danger of egotism and selfish complacency is far removed.

As our reading of narrative poetry continues, we shall become acquainted with the elemental struggles of life. We shall see that love, as in Browning's *The Statue and the Bust*, is a powerful agent for either happiness or sorrow in the world. Despite their mutual love, the Grand Duke Ferdinand and the Lady let the days pass by until they were satisfied with mere expectation. Their lives were blighted because of their inability to act. In Amy Lowell's *Patterns*, the young lady grieves over the loss of her betrothed as she walks "up and down the patterned paths" in the garden. In a month she would have been his wife; but her Colonel died in action, "fighting with the Duke in Flanders." The patterns of life are cruel indeed.

Viewed from a purely physical point of view, man is a loser in his struggle with life. Sooner or later his body succumbs to the hammering of Time and Decay. He passes on and is soon forgot. In narrative poetry, more so than in the lyric and dramatic forms, this reflection upon the transitoriness of life and man's ultimate physical defeat is presented in such a manner as to lead even a casual reader to detect a predominating note of sadness. In keeping with the conditions of actual life, the unmistakable attitude of the average narrator is that man is destined sooner or later to acknowledge his inability to cope with the forces about him. After an active and useful life, Beowulf, in the epic by that name, at last fails to survive the combat with the Firedrake. The sister falls a victim to her sister's jealousy in *The Twa Sisters*. Despite the admonitions of angels, Adam and Eve sin, and are expelled from the Garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost*. King Arthur, in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, fails to accomplish the high purposes which actuated him in the formation of the Round Table. In Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* the son is slain unknowingly by his own father. The three who dwelt in Flannan Isle are apparently drowned in the sea in Gibson's *Flannan Isle*. These are but a few instances of an overwhelming number which attest to sadness as one of life's inescapable conditions. Glorious, however, as portrayed in most narrative poetry, is the spirit of man, which like that of the medieval knight, faces obstacles and, if need be, meets death with a glowing and triumphant smile.

Narrative poetry recounts experience mainly through the medium of action. Man delights in action. The very nature of his physical being demands it. Every fiber of his body is exhilarated by the recitation of activity. A leap across a stream, the hurling of a stone, and the pursuit of a quarry leave an invigorating afterglow. The prowess of man has always been the object of praise. The accomplishment of a deed which entails strength, alertness, and daring never fails to challenge the virile mind. Since human beings thus delight in physical activity, whether by direct participation or not, it is natural that they should be interested in hearing about the deeds of others, thereby living through, in their own minds, the experiences of those about whom they hear. That type of literature which chronicles the action of men is of necessity appealing; and that literary

creation will be the most successful which can best merge its hearers into a state of self-forgetfulness and induce them to enter wholeheartedly into the life of those whom the story presents. A total and sympathetic resignation on the part of the reader to the will of the story-teller is a chief requisite.

Poetry has certain characteristics which enable it to accomplish unique results in the depiction of action. The plot may be captivating and the characters pre-eminently engrossing. There may be unity and clarity in the sequential unfolding of theme and motive; and a proper co-ordination of action and personality may be convincingly ordered. By expressing these in a poetic medium, the poet can infuse a sense of life which is denied the prose narrator. The music and rhythm make for more suggestiveness and emotionalism. Verse has a tendency toward condensation. The popular ballads are marvelous tributes to the possibilities of metrical brevity. The poet can order the speed of his narrative to a greater nicety. Meter also has the facility of adding a bewitching indefiniteness to the account, which by that very nature comes close to reality and to man's spiritual interpretation of his world.

QUESTIONS

1. Read Stevenson's narrative poem, *Heather Ale*, and Shelley's lyric poem, *The Indian Serenade*. What differences do you note in them? Consider in each the poet himself, what he says, and the mood in which he says it.
2. Character sketches are to be found in both prose and poetry. Select one pair from the following and contrast them. How does the prose writer on the one hand and the poet on the other differ in their methods?

Emerson: *Abraham Lincoln*

Markham: *Lincoln, the Man of the People*

Lamb: *A Character of the Late Elia*

Browning: *The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*

Addison and Steele: *Character of the Upholsterer*

Kipling: *Gunga Din*

Prescott: *The Character and Fate of Montezuma* (from *The History and Conquest of Mexico*)

Robinson: *Miniver Cheevy*

3. Read Hawthorne's *The Birthmark* and Francis Hopkinson's *The Battle of the Kegs*. Both are brief stories, one in prose and the other in verse. What advantages does each form possess as a story-telling medium? What disadvantages? A similar study might be made of Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* and Rossetti's *The King's Tragedy*.
4. In what manner and to what extent does the personality of Wordsworth himself shine through his story of *Michael*?
5. Which stanzas in Burns' *The Cotter's Saturday Night* are narrative? Which are lyrical? What does the poem gain by the fusion of these two types?
6. What portions of or elements in Browning's *A Grammarian's Funeral* are narrative in nature?
7. Enumerate the experiences in life which are reflected in Browning's *The Statue and the Bust*.
8. Is the narrative element a subordinate or predominant feature in the following: Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, Davidson's *Thirty Bob a Week*, Gay's *The Shepherd's Week*, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*?
9. Judging from the content of the poems themselves, what was each poet's purpose in writing the following narratives: Kipling's in *Danny Deevee*, Swinburne's in *The Witch Mother*, Morris' in *Winter Weather*, Southey's in *The Battle of Blenheim*, and Burns' in *Duncan Gray*?
10. Study portions of the following poems with a view of ascertaining what devices each poet uses in achieving action in narrative verse: Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Browning's *Hervé Riel*, and Tennyson's *The Defense of Lucknow*. How do these compare in action with Keats' *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*, and Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult*?
11. What aspects of life are reflected in Keats' *The Eve of St. Agnes* and Cowper's *John Gilpin*?
12. After reading Masfield's *The Widow in the Bye Street* and *The Everlasting Mercy*, characterize the poet as a narrator in verse. Point out some features which particularly appeal to you and some technical devices which the writer employs.
13. What part, if any, does love play in Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*, Morris' *The Wanderers*, Swinburne's *Tristram in*

Lyonesse, Longfellow's *The Birds of Killingworth*, and Whittier's *Abraham Davenport*?

14. In methods of story-telling, what similarities do you see in the popular ballad, *Sir Patrick Spens*, written in the fourteenth century, and James Elroy Flecker's *The Ballad of Iskander*, written in the twentieth century?
15. Scan any ten poems that are named in these exercises. What variations in verse structure do you notice? Make a study of the rhyme schemes and of the stanzas employed.

EXAMPLES

English Literature:

Anonymous: Beowulf

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Mort Arthure

Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales

Anonymous: Sir Patrick Spens

The Wife of Usher's Well

Lord Randal

The Daemon Lover

Thomas Rymer

The Nutbrowne Maide

Edmund Spenser: The Faerie Queene

John Milton: Paradise Lost

Paradise Regained

Alexander Pope: The Rape of the Lock

William Cowper: John Gilpin

Robert Burns: Tam O' Shanter

William Wordsworth: Michael

Laodamia

Walter Scott: The Lay of the Last Minstrel

Marmion

Lady of the Lake

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Ancient Mariner

Christabel

Thomas Moore: Lalla Rookh

Lord Byron: The Bride of Abydos

Siege of Corinth

The Destruction of Sennacherib

The Prisoner of Chillon

John Keats: Endymion

The Eve of St. Agnes

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Lamia

Thomas Babington Macaulay: Lays of Ancient Rome

Alfred Tennyson: The Lady of Shalott

The Princess

Enoch Arden

Idylls of the King

Robert Browning: The Statue and the Bust

Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came

Hervé Riel

Matthew Arnold: Tristram and Iseult

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Troy Town

Sister Helen

The King's Tragedy

William Morris: The Defense of Guenevere

The Haystack in the Floods

The Life and Death of Jason

The Earthly Paradise

Sigurd the Volsung

Algernon Charles Swinburne: Tristram of Lyonesse

The Tale of Balen

Rudyard Kipling: The Ballad of East and West

William Butler Yeats: The Ballad of Moll Magee

John Masfield: The Everlasting Mercy

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: The Blind Rower

The Brothers

Alfred Noyes: Drake

American Literature:

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Evangeline

Hiawatha

Edgar Allan Poe: The Raven

Walt Whitman: Come up from the Fields, Father

Sidney Lanier: The Revenge of Hamish

Edwin Arlington Robinson: The Return of Morgan and

Fingal

Tristram

CHAPTER IV

BALLAD

THERE are four chief kinds of narrative poetry. We shall consider them in the following order: *ballad*, *epic*, *metrical romance*, and *metrical tale*.

The Scotchman Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1655-1716) once remarked that he "knew a very wise man who believed that...if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who would make the laws of a nation." Whatever may have been Fletcher's definition of the term *ballad*, he realized that ballads have exerted an inestimable influence upon that large body of peoples to whom they were the only means of emotional expression. They became a part of their consciousness and everyday life, a source of entertainment and consolation.

THE POPULAR BALLAD *

The popular ballad is not restricted to any one nation. It lived among the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Romans, and has at one time or other thrived in almost every country of Europe. It was not restricted to any one time, but appeared whenever the conditions were favorable for its composition and growth. The time most propitious, of course, is in the dawn of a people's civilization, when a society expresses itself freely as a body, emotionally and unpretentiously.

Sir Walter Scott understood the significance of these popular ballads and imbibed their spirit when he enthusiastically testified: "I remember well the spot where I read these volumes—Percy's *Reliques*—for the first time. It was beneath a large platanus tree in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the garden. The summer day sped on so fast that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and

* Other terms also used: *Old*, *Folk*, *Primitive*, *Simple*, and *Traditional*.

was found still entranced in my intellectual banquet." Many cannot share the enthusiasm of Scott. Indeed Scott was one of the first to be attracted by the old ballads of his own medieval countrymen. In the early history of ballad collecting it was customary for literary critics to ridicule ballads; but these narrative verses have since won for themselves an important place in the history of literature, not because of their literary excellence so much as for their influence upon subsequent conscious narrative art.

The word *ballad* was derived from the old French *baller*, meaning *to dance*. Originally, it was used to designate a song which was sung to the rhythmic movements of a dancing chorus. As used in England and America, the application of the term has been extended to signify a short narrative in lyric verse. It is lyric not in the subjective sense, but in its adaptation for singing. Considering the great variation among the pieces listed as ballads, a more differentiating definition cannot be given. One is tempted to say that by *ballad* we mean *Sir Patrick Spens*, *The Douglas Tragedy*, *Lord Randal*, and *A Gest of Robyn Hode*.

While the ballads differ widely in one or more particulars, the pleasure to be derived from them is usually of the same kind. They make us live again in the atmosphere of the simple, unsophisticated folk. We see them toiling and fighting. We feel their sorrows and understand the inherited superstitions and fears which actuated their lives. We get a glimpse of what they considered right and honorable. The manly tone, the constancy and loyalty, the genuineness of their speech, the absence of pretense—all are reflected in the songs which they treasured. We see many broken lives, countless tragedies, and touching love episodes.

To appreciate the ballads, then, the reader should approach them in the proper spirit. He should be willing to make the necessary readjustment, and place himself in the mood of those who sang and loved them. He should transport his spirit back to the standards and ideals of art which actually gave rise to ballad composition. The conventionalities that characterize our own complex civilization he should shake off, and instead, should picture in his mind the humble home and its fireside, the tavern and its circle of half-dimmed faces. The reader should forget the science, the inventions, the organizations of our own

day and see life in its mystery and symbolism. The ballads were not intended to be scrutinized and analyzed. The reader should think of them in connection with some tune; for stripped of their music, they are no longer themselves. The wild flower belongs in its native setting, not beside its cultivated kin on some well-kept lawn.

If we are sympathetic, the ballad will open for us a door to a world of intense interest. We see man as he is. The popular ballad speaks in terms of universal human nature; it echoes the great elemental themes of love and death. Life is viewed in its simplest terms. The world is one of wonder, in which every flower, tree, and animal is endowed with unusual significance. We must live in the humble cottage that shelters the peasant of England, in the shanty that housed the rugged mountaineer during the "Golden age of lumbering" in our own country, in the prairie cabin during the wild cowboy days, in the huts of the southern Negro slave. Here we should find perhaps uncouth but sterling qualities. Sidney Lanier enthusiastically wrote: "I know that he who walks in the way these ballads point will be manful in necessary fight, fair in trade, loyal in love, generous to the poor, tender in the household, prudent in living, plain in speech, merry upon occasion, simple in behaviour and honest in all things."

HISTORY

The popular ballads have no author's name attached to them. The problem of determining just how they were composed has been made more difficult by the nature of the society which gave rise to ballad composition. Ballads came into being at different times in various countries, but seemingly under the same circumstances. They are the product of homogeneous groups, of a people who knew not writing. What information and culture this society possessed were orally transmitted and entrusted entirely to the memory. No written records are therefore extant regarding the identity of the author or authors. Had the author's name been originally associated with his product, it could at best have been known only in his home circle. The moment his poem was taken over by his neighbor, the story of the poem and not the author of it would be of prime importance.

The persons from whom the popular ballads were collected

had no knowledge as to the age of the poem they contributed; nor had they any idea as to the manner in which it came to be. The manuscripts which preserved many pieces are silent on this point. Dryden published some ballads in *Miscellanies* (1684-1708); *A Collection of Old Ballads* came out in 1723; Ramsay's *Evergreen* (1724) contained several; Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) is the most valuable of the older collections: Scott's *The Border Minstrelsy* is one of the many romances of ballad collecting. Men like Herd, Ritson, Buchan, Motherwell, Kinloch, and Jamieson have also collected a number. The most valuable of modern collections is Professor Francis James Child's monumental *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. None of these men, however, have solved the problem of authorship.

In their efforts to solve the riddle of ballad origin these scholars soon discovered that the printed document was no evidence of the age of a particular ballad. A ballad taken down in the eighteenth century from recitation may be older than one discovered in the seventeenth century. What is pretty well established is that the making of old ballads in England dates back to the eleventh century and that it ceased soon after the middle of the sixteenth century. The heyday of the ballad falls in the two or three centuries before the Renaissance, although ballads continued to be sung much longer.

Attempts have been made to determine the dates of certain manuscripts which preserved some of the English and Scottish ballads. *Judas* dates from the thirteenth century; *Riddles Wisely Expounded*, around 1445. Somewhat later came *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *St. Stephen and Herod*, and *Robyn and Gandelweyn*. Somewhere in the vicinity of 1500 belong *Robin Hood and the Potter* and *Crow and Pie*; about fifty years later, *The Battle of Otterburn* and *The Hunting of the Cheviot* (older version). In this same century belong *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Clerk Saunders*, and *Child Waters*. *Sir Andrew Barton* and *Captain Car* are assigned to the seventeenth century. Other texts are preserved in the "broadsides" and other miscellanies of the seventeenth century. When we think of all the traditional ballads that have doubtless met some such fate as had almost been meted out to the Percy manuscript (of being used to start the

kitchen fire), we are led into wild conjectures as to what there might have been.

All this does not, however, settle the question of authorship. The problem is engaging, but perplexing. The ballad scholars have all taken a guess. It is made all the more elusive when we are reminded that the characteristics which we shall later enumerate might also hold true for the ballads of Greece, France, Portugal, Denmark, and Italy, as well as of England, Scotland, and America. It is to be expected, therefore, that when we inquire into the question of authorship, the opinions will be divergent and often contradictory. All have, however, some claim to our consideration. Let us first limit our inquiry to the 305 English and Scottish ballads contained in Professor Child's collection.

Communal composition challenges our first consideration. According to this theory the popular ballads were composed by a community as a whole, or by a small homogeneous group. Let us picture for ourselves, in the early history of any people's civilization, a small group assembled for some purpose which to all of them is already clear. Their intellectual interests are the same; no division between literate and illiterate has yet been made. An incident has just occurred which concerns them all: the sudden death of one of their leaders, the return from a successful foray, or perhaps the termination of a feud with some neighboring tribe. In the course of their meeting—a dance begins; the rhythm challenges their co-operation as it had done many times before. They breathe and move as one body. They have in the past suffered as a group the common vicissitudes of life, have borne up under the same burdens and dangers; and now as their spirits are attuned to one purpose, and their bodies swaying to one melody, some lyric outbursts bearing upon the present case escape now one, now another, until at the subsidal of the emotional exercise, a crude and unfinished song has been launched, the germ of a later and better version.

Those supporting communal composition point to the refrain as indicative of choral origin. About this refrain, which they believe the group to have chanted, the ballad proper grew up. This refrain appears in such pieces as *Babylon: Or, The Bonnie Banks o' Fordie*:

There were three ladies lived in a bower,
Eh vow bonnie—
 And they went out to pull a flower,
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

The second and fourth lines are repeated in every stanza as a refrain. The same may be observed in *The Cruel Brother* and *The Twa Sisters*.

The use of commonplaces or recurrent passages, ballad idioms so to speak, suggest communal composition. These so-called conventional phrases are well known by the group and are utilized whenever the occasion arises, making the task of composition a comparatively easy one. In *The Lass of Roch Royal*, for example, these recurrences appear:

O *who will* shoe my bony foot?
 Or *who will* glove my hand?
 Or *who will* bind my middle jimp
With the broad lily band?

O *I's gar* shoe thy bony foot,
 And *I's gar* glove thy hand,
 And *I's gar* bind thy middle jimp
With the broad lily band.

This requires little improvisation and suggests the possibility of group composition. Use of repetition, including incremental repetition, is closely akin to the foregoing. Often entire stanzas are repeated by a messenger, sometimes word for word, as they were given to him by his master. Child Maurice, in the old ballad by that title, sends his foot-page to John Steward's wife with a message, part of which is as follows:

And as itt ffaller, as many times
 As knotts beene knitt on a kell,
 Or marchant men gone to leeue London,
 Either to buy ware or sell.

And, as itt ffaller, as many times
 As any hart can thinke,
 Or schoole-masters are in any schoole-house,
 Writting with pen and inke:

These words are repeated by the foot-page when he addresses the wife of John Steward.

There is, in the second place, a group of people who believe that the *minstrels composed*, originally, *the English and Scottish ballads*. It appears that this attitude was held by Bishop Percy and Sir Walter Scott, likewise by many who lived in a day not far removed from the ballad period. It is contended that the songs which are most popular among the folk are those reflecting the type of life above them, such as the medieval minstrels were wont to compose. Professor Child himself pointed out several (*The Boy and the Mantle*, *King Arthur and King Cornwall*, *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*) that were, as he stated it, "clearly not of the same rise, and not meant for the same ears. . . . They would come down by professional rather than by domestic tradition, through minstrels rather than knitters and weavers. They suit the hall better than the bower, the tavern or public square better than the cottage. . . ." In this class would also fall such other and later ballads as *The Rising in the North*, *Northumberland Betrayed by Douglas*, and *The Rose of England*. If these show evidences of minstrel authorship, might not the other ballads also be descendants of minstrel pieces, some better preserved than others and some more subjected to a communal transmission than others? This position of minstrel origin is strengthened by a comparative study of *Kemp Owyne* and the romance *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, the former being a summary and the very essence of the latter.

In the third place, there are those who claim that the English and Scottish ballads are *descended from the lyrical dance-songs of primitive peoples*. The topics found in the English popular ballads and in those of lowland Scotland have much in common with those found in the ballads of Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, and the Slavonic countries. These topics are so widely distributed as to suggest, not only great antiquity, but influence as well. It is possible that these ballad themes crossed the channel to England; for it is altogether likely that the Anglo-Saxons had their balladry, as the various epic remnants and *Beowulf* seem to indicate. Thus there is an attempt to establish a connection with the older narrative poems, and to regard the ballad, not as the beginning but as the remnants of larger epic-like narratives.

The most recent theory to be advanced is that by Professor

Louise Pound in her *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*. She traced the ballad to the medieval church. In the oldest ballad texts there are evidences of ecclesiastical influence. Like the medieval drama, the church may have utilized the narrative art to popularize Biblical history or legend. In the matter of chronological appearance, some of the oldest ballads are ecclesiastical in tone, such as *Judas* and *St. Stephen and Herod*. As in the drama, the ballad may have lost its edifying purpose when it fell into secular hands, and with time incorporated martial, outlaw, and domestic themes. So many new types of medieval poetry can be attributed to the minstrels and ecclesiastics that it would be natural to link the ballad type with them also.

TRANSMISSION

After all, however, the origin of the ballad is not the most important factor, but rather that of oral *transmission*. Here we are on solid ground. We know that the English and Scottish ballads, as well as those of any other country, have been handed down from father to son, from mother to daughter—from one generation to the next. Ballad collectors have taken down many ballads as others recited or sung them. The reciter in many instances knew for certain that he had learned it from his mother, she from her mother, and she in turn from her grandmother.

Were there any further doubt, the presence of variants and versions would be unmistakable evidence of oral transmission. Of the 305 English and Scottish ballads contained in Child's collection, at least sixty have more than one version of laudable merit. There are often Scottish, English, and American versions of the same ballad. Versions of *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight* (also known as *May Collin*) are to be found in every European country. *The Two Sisters* appears not only in English, Scottish, Welsh, American, and Irish versions, but also in Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Faroe, and Swedish. Of the 305 original ballads listed by Child, about eighty-five survive in England, and over a hundred have thus far been found in the United States.

The mere act of composition is, therefore, found to be only the beginning of the ballad's life. The folk take it over. It is now generally admitted that great masses of poetry have been transmitted by oral tradition. As this poetry circulates among the

folk, it undergoes changes. Lines and stanzas are often changed or eliminated; rhymes and names of characters are altered to meet the local or individual fancy. Obsolete words and pronunciations would naturally be dropped. Whatever in the ballad would appear unintelligible to the recipient of it, or foreign in any way, would be rejected and a substitution be made. Some of the more blatant excrescences, such as matters of sentiment, reflection, characterization, and evaluation of motives and emotions would also be subject to change. Only the dramatic, the concrete, the salient action and speeches would be retained. Personal traits of the individuals through whom the material passes would also enter. Slips of memory, special likes and dislikes would guide this communal editing. So long as the ballad continues to be handed down, it can have no fixed and final form. It will be subjected to the same changes to which any language and community life is subjected. The popular ballad then is an intensely fluid, not a static thing.

This second act of collective composition, or re-creation, is more important than the first. It is this second influence that accounts for the characteristics which we have already enumerated. Time has been a greater factor in determining ballad nature than origin. This recreative process may continue for many centuries. Some ballads that were reclaimed in the eighteenth century date back in general tone, theme, and setting to the fifteenth century. Oral transmission has been accounted of such importance by certain students of the ballad as to lead them to propose the theory that the old ballads were not composed originally at all, but merely grew. As we examine the ballad materials, we are impressed with the inextricable tangle, the overlapping, and the interchanging that had been going on during the oral period of transmission. The unconscious lending and borrowing becomes obvious as our reading of ballads widens.

The act of transmission changes ballad tunes as well as ballad words and meter. Phillips Barry, in his article on *The Origin of Folk-Melodies*, has found at least ten tunes in existence to *Lord Randal*.

We have now considered the various theories of ballad origin and the part transmission plays in giving the ballad its unique characteristics. Whether the folk or the individual originally composed the ballad remains an open question; in either case the

product was taken over by the folk and eventually became their own. Individual authorship, it appears, is the most plausible; for communal transmission, following the act of individual authorship, can adequately account for the traditional ballads. It is natural to assume that at some time in the process the individual had a major share. He may have guided the group emotion at the moment when self-expression was inevitable; he may have been influenced by the incoherent and ununified suggestions of the group and reshaped them into a sequential and easy-flowing narrative; or he may have started the ballad on its journey. The greater part of the traditional ballads are best understood when considered as the product of individual authorship and the subsequent re-creation and remaking at the hands of the folk while in the process of communal transmission.

BALLADS IN THE UNITED STATES

When the Colonists came to America in the seventeenth century, they brought with them some of the traditional English ballads. This inflow of ballad material continued with the arrival of later English, Scotch, and Scotch-Irish immigrants during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Mrs. James McGill contributed *The False Knight Upon the Road* to the Maine collection and asserted that she learned it in Galloway, Scotland, when she was a child. A certain Mrs. Leary, who gave a version of Lord Randal, told the collector that she learned it in her youth in Ireland. Ballad versions were also carried into this country by visitors, sailors, and returning travelers. Indeed, we may go so far as to suggest that the importation of folk-ballads has not yet entirely ceased.

These immigrant ballads first took root in that part of the country lying along the Atlantic seaboard from Nova Scotia to Georgia. It is interesting to conjecture that several of the old-world ballads, recovered in our country, may be in form earlier than those which were found in England. An American version of *Barbara Allen's Cruelty*, for example, supplies certain omissions in the narrative which the English texts lack. Similar observations might be made for *The Maid Freed from the Gallows* and *The Bent sae Brown*.

With the great movement westward, many of the immigrant ballads found their way to various sections in the West. Thus in

the early part of our own country, versions of these ballads were scattered over a large geographical area. On the whole, however, these old-world ballads were best preserved in regions where the songs and song-modes of the past had not been displaced by the entrance of later songs and song-modes. The North Atlantic states, the southern mountains, and the Appalachian region—in general those regions of the United States which were settled earliest—were most favorable for oral transmission and preservation. In these mountain sections ballads were preserved amid social conditions not unlike those which obtained in their native English home. It will be seen that isolated regions like those in Maine, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky afforded the best conditions for ballad survival.

Those foreign ballads which had the widest circulation in New England are *Lord Randal*, *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight*, *The Elfin Knight*, *The Gypsie Laddie*, and *Bonny Barbara Allen*. In the South the following were most generally distributed: *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight*, *Lord Thomas and Fair Ellinor*, *The Maid Freed from the Gallows*, *Bonny Barbara Allen*, and *Lord Lovel*. All in all, *Bonny Barbara Allen* is the most popular of the traditional ballads in America. It is estimated that approximately 100 of Child's 305 ballads have thus far been found in the United States.

The imported ballads underwent the changes imposed upon them by the sectional modes and general characteristics of their new environment, that is they became subject to the same alterations of oral tradition here as in their native home. Titles were changed. The good old English title "Lord Randal" becomes "Jimmy Randolph" in North Carolina, "Jonny Ramble" in Ohio, "Jimmy Ransing" in Indiana, "Jimmy Randall" in Illinois, "Johnny Randall" in Colorado, and "John Randall" in Pennsylvania. What is true of titles is likewise true of characters, localizations, events, and general descriptive and narrative terms.

Lord Randal, the ballad already referred to, has no less than twelve variants in West Virginia. Here are some of the first lines taken from certain versions in order to illustrate further the changes that occur:

O where have you been, Lord Randal my son?

O where have you been, Johnny Randolph, my son?

Where have you been, Johnnie Randal, my son?
 Where have you been all day, Henry, my son?
 Where have you been, Willie, O Willie, my son?

In Maine, versions have been found with the following first lines:

O where have you been, fair Randall, my son?
 Where have you been, my own dearest one?
 O where have you been, dear Wilson, my son?
 O where have you been, O Billy, my son?
 Ah, where d'ye go courtin, Sweet Nelson, my son?
 Where were you all day, my own pretty boy?
 Oh, where have you been, Tyranna, my son?
 Where have you been a-walkin', Fair Andrew, my son?

Occasionally, some of these ballads are preserved pretty exactly; for the most part, however, changes are to be found. An examination of the opening stanzas in some of the versions of *Bonny Barbara Allen* will make this clear:

An English version of *Bonny Barbara Allen* begins:

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
 When the green leaves were a falling,
 That Sir John Graeme, in the West Country,
 Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town,
 To the place where she was dwelling:
 'O haste and come to my master dear,
 Gin ye be Barbara Allan.'

A South Carolina version opens thus:

It was upon a high, high hill
 Two maidens chose their dwelling;
 And one was known both far and wide,
 Was known as Barbara Allen.

'Twas in the merry month of May,
 All the flowers were blooming,
 A young man on his death-bed lay
 For the love of Barbara Allen.

He sent a servant unto her
In the town where she was dwelling.
'Come, Miss, O Miss, to my master dying
If your name be Barbara Allen.'

From Clinton County, Pennsylvania, comes this version:

In Reading town, when I was young,
There was a fair maid dwellin',
Made every youth cry, "Well away!"
Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,
When green buds they were swellin',
Young Johnny Grove on his death-bed lay,
For love of Barbara Allen.

One of the many variants that have been found in West Virginia has these opening stanzas:

In Scotland I was bred and born,
In London was my dwelling;
I fell in love with a pretty maid,
Her name was Barbara Ellen.

I courted her for months and weeks,
Hoping that I might gain her;
Although she solemnly replied,
No man on earth should have her.

'Twas in the merry month of May,
The flowers and trees were swaying;
A young man on his death-bed lay
For love of Barbara Ellen.

These are but a few of the many American versions of this ballad. Reed Smith lists thirteen for South Carolina; John H. Cox, twelve for West Virginia; and Barry, Eckstrom, and Smyth, twelve for Maine. What is true of this example is also true of many others. An examination of a group of these traditional ballads in America would reveal these further changes from the English originals. Some pieces lose compactness, some are lengthened by repetition and iteration, and still others are crossed with

other songs. Frequently passages are forgotten and almost unrecognizable substitutions made. Sometimes two poems are combined, and a new amalgam song resulting. Again, a traditional ballad may cross with a song of recent origin. In general, the repugnant elements tend to disappear, likewise the supernatural elements. Of the entire list of Child ballads, the tragic ballads have survived best the vicissitudes of migration and oral transmission. The love of the folk for tragic episodes is demonstrated in the United States as well as in England.

The English ballads appearing in Professor Child's collection were not the only ones transplanted into the United States. Other ballads from the British Isles, as well as from Europe generally, were also brought across the Atlantic. These poems were gathered from various parts of the United States. For example, *The Drowsy Sleeper* was recovered in Lincoln, Nebraska; *The Boston Burglar*, in Iowa; *The Prentice Boy*, in Indiana; and *Charleston*, in Wyoming. In such instances as those of *The Farmer's Boy* and *Jack Riley*, we know definitely by whom they were brought to this country. In general, this class of imported ballads is inferior, both in theme and structure, to those which are descendants of the traditional English texts.

Turning from the English traditional and other immigrant ballads to those indigenous to our own country, we are confronted with the necessity of inquiring more closely into the meaning of the term, *ballad*. Were we to define it with sole reference to the folk-product of England, we should have to exclude many of the American pieces. If we compare ballads from various nations and geographical areas, we find many variations within the type, both in structure and in theme. But there are likewise certain resemblances as we examine, for example, Danish, Scandinavian, English, and American ballads. What these have in common are the criteria upon which we may base our definition of folk-ballads. They are stories told lyrically, they are easily recited or sung, their form is the result, partly or entirely, of oral transmission, and their authors generally are lost to view. Upon the strength of this definition we shall consider the contribution which various localities in the United States have made to ballad literature.

The large majority of our best indigenous ballads were composed during the nineteenth century, say after 1830. Such pieces

as *The Silver Dagger*, *The Death of Garfield*, *Fuller and Warren*, *Casey Jones*, *Jesse James*, *Poor Lorella*, and *Young Charlotte* are among our most genuine examples. Of the last of these, *Young Charlotte*, we may be justly proud. Like numerous other ballads, this one has spread throughout the United States and Nova Scotia. Although the original text is attributed to William L. Carter of Benson or Bensontown, Vermont, before 1833, the cowboys sang it in Texas, the lumbermen in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the mountaineers in Kentucky, West Virginia, Maine, and Northern Pennsylvania.

In addition to what we might term as the "general" list of ballads, those which by their nature experienced a wide distribution, and were attached to no special group or condition of life, are those that are linked with three leading groups of people, namely with the Negro of the South, the shanty-boy of the lumber camps in the East and Middle West, and the cowboy of the western cattle ranches.

The Negro folk-songs of the South offer the greatest problem to the student of the ballad. As the name, "folk-songs," implies, most of the pieces are songs, and not ballads at all, comprising, rather, religious songs, dance and banjo songs, songs about animals, work songs, rural songs, songs about recent events, songs of the Negro's sins and of bad men, and songs directly reflecting race-consciousness.

For a generation or two after the Negro was first brought to America, he had to make the transition as best he could from the African dialects to the English language. Travelers and students of African music and folklore are practically unanimous in their claim that the Negro was a great singer in his native home, and that he brought his love of music with him. While this is unquestionably true, still there is practically no record of Negro singing in America until the nineteenth century. The present interest in Negro folk-song began around 1914. Serious collecting also began at about that time.

What we know as the American folk-song is neither Negro nor American. The Negro has a fundamentally different idea of music. He but imperfectly comprehended the American words, music, and social and intellectual conventions represented in the American songs. His imitation was destined to take fanciful and incongruous directions. Those who have made a study both of

African and of American Negro music and song assert that there are certain connections between them. We have in American Negro folk-songs, therefore, a composite product. Add to this fact the influence of the later minstrel, ballet, and vaudeville, and Negro songs present an inextricable mass. This much we may venture to say: that only about thirty per cent of the total number sung by the Negro people are genuine Negro folk-songs in origin and in their present state. Despite their irregularity, they all bear the stamp of Negro transmission and represent to a greater or lesser degree the Negro people.

Examining this large store of song, we find certain predominating characteristics. Improvisation is not peculiar to the Negro, but is carried to a greater length than by other American groups. Variations in lines and stanzas are limitless, recurring in variously modified form. In fact there seems to be an accumulative force at work. We cannot say that a certain stanza belongs to a particular song; it is found, rather, to skip all around, at home in practically any song. This freedom is made possible by the variable stanzas and tunes. The balladists, in the main, are not permitted this independence. For this and other reasons we find so few ballads among the hundreds of Negro folk-songs. In addition to the foregoing singularities, the Negro singer was fond of refrains, parody, and dialect.

Considering more definitely those Negro folk-pieces which approach the ballad in theme or structure, we find that some of them are of ballet or vaudeville origin; others originated with Negro minstrels in the decades before the Civil War, while others are based on some early songs of the white people. It should be observed that ballads are not so typically Negro as are the work-songs and religious songs. The strong tendency on the part of the Negro to pick up material from all sources and to utilize it in all kinds of combinations makes it difficult to determine just what route some of these ballads followed from the time they were launched until they arrived at their present form. We can easily understand why there are extant so many variants and fragments.

Upon reading Negro ballads, we shall find a kind of stage humor in such examples like *The Voodoo Man*; *Oh, way down in South Carolina*; and *My Gal*. Notes of pathos, while comparatively few in number, are nevertheless very real in such

ballads like *Uncle Ned*, *Wake Nicodemus*, and *My Old Blue Dog*. Some of the Negro ballads are merely metrical outlines, as it were. Others combine several story elements into one narrative, seemingly oblivious of the demands of sequence or logic. The irresistible religious temperament of the Negro creeps into their balladry, as may be seen in *Theology in the Question* and *Pomp's Soliloquy*. The first two stanzas from the first of these pieces will illustrate:

Now I'se got a notion in my head
Dat when you come to die,
And stand de 'zamination
In de Cote House in de sky,

You'll be 'stonished at de questions
Dat angels gwine to ask us,
When dey gits you on de witness stan'
And pin you to de facts.

The balladry of the lumber-jack or shanty-boy, the second of our groups, invariably brings to our mind's eye a scene of a lumber camp. It is Saturday night—cold, snowy, and dark. Within the shack are seated a score of men, a supper safely stowed away within each one of them, the pipes sending up their curls of smoke to the bare rafters, and in the center of half-dimmed faces a log stove, sending out its friendly, glowing heat. A song is begun; and presently the shanty rocks with the swelling notes as the lines of some well known ballad are struck off.

These men have been shut away from the world for months and months. Theirs is the fresh outdoor life, physical strength, bold vitality. They know the ring of the ax, the twang of the saw-blade. Their days are made up of long hours, hard labor, simple fare, primitive accommodations. These brave men have loved, hated, played, struggled, fought, and sang together. Here in the remote and isolated sections, and amid the dangers and toil of a primitive forest they took very naturally to that prince of pastimes—the singing of ballads.

The lumbering industry began on a very small scale several decades after the English settlers arrived on America's shore; for occasionally shiploads of lumber were shipped to Old England in these early days. But it was not until well on in the eighteenth

century that professional woodsmen appeared. The supremacy in lumber production moved successively from New England to New York, from New York to Pennsylvania, and thence westward into Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In 1870 there began an unusual demand for lumber; and the so-called "golden age of lumbering" was ushered in, continuing until about 1900. In the years, let us say, between 1850 and 1900 the shanty-boy roamed up and down and across the country, carrying with him not only his scanty personal possessions but his balladry as well.

In addition to the English traditional ballads, many of which they knew, these shanty-boys had also evolved their own songs, representative of the type of life they knew and loved.

For over half a century, in the state of Maine, conditions were favorable to the growth of ballads. One of the best lumber-jack ballads ever sung in the camps of Maine, was that of *The Jam of Gerry's Rock*:

Come all you brave shanty boys,
And list while I relate
Concerning a young shanty boy
And his untimely fate;

Concerning a young river man,
So manly, true, and brave;
'Twas on a jam at Gerry's Rock
He met his watery grave.

'Twas on a Sunday morning,
As you will quickly hear,
Our logs were piled up mountain high,
We could not keep them clear.

and so the ballad runs on for seventeen stanzas, recounting the death of foreman Monroe and his six brave assistants when the log-jam gave way. This ballad, though originating in Maine, found its way to the lumber camps of Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Michigan, Minnesota, into the cowboy camps of the Southwest, and even into the rugged highlands of Scotland.

A score of the ballads, current in Maine, as we have already intimated, were known in other lumber camps. In most instances we are not certain in which locality these songs originated. Of this we are sure, that nowhere were the conditions for the

composition and transmission of shanty ballads so ideal as in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, during the "golden age of lumbering." No shanty life was ever so isolated and so primitive, no lumber-jack was ever so unattached. It is from the survivors of these camps that such a collector as Franz Rickaby, between 1898-1925, procured the most illuminating information that we now possess regarding the composition and rendition of these ballads. According to Mr. Rickaby, the songs were sung mostly at night, either in solo or ensemble. A small number of songs were composed by individuals who set out definitely to compose, as did W. N. Allen in *John Murphy*, or *On the Banks of the Little Eau Pleine* and in *The Shanty-Boy on the Big Eau Claire*. Some of the ballads, like *Jim Whalen* and *Jack Haggerty*, have an historical basis. Others, like *The Dying Whore*, were imitations of one of the English traditional ballads, *The Unfortunate Rake*.

All in all, the most popular, as well as among the best, of the lumber-jack's ballads were *Gerry's Rocks*, *Jack Haggerty's Flat River Girl*, *The Fatal Oak* (written by Mrs. Payne), and *The Shanty-Boy on the Big Eau Claire*.

The change in lumbering came with the turn of the century. The age of steel supplanted the shanty-boy's prowess. The complexion of the crews changed. Songs ceased, and the romance of logging was gone. The personal lumbering crews were supplanted by the impersonal lumbering industries.

The third of our indigenous ballad groups is concerned with the cow-camps. The years between 1865 and 1890 witnessed the greatest activity of the cowboy in the West. Large, free areas of grassy plains extended from Texas to Montana. In numerous instances a single person owned thousands of cattle. Such a cattle owner needed the help of many men to care for his herds during the winter, to round them up in the spring, to mark and brand the yearlings, and finally to drive them to market at Fort Dodge, Kansas. It was not unusual to take the young steers for grazing as far north as Montana.

A ranch community was so entirely disconnected from the world outside that they constituted a society uniquely their own—a society reduced to its lowest and its simplest terms. As is the case in every true ballad-making and ballad-singing community, these men shared the same experiences, the same dangers, and

the same thoughts. If such a community desired entertainment, it had to turn to itself. Songs arose.

Some very few of these songs were composed by the cowboys themselves. Others were brought by young adventurous Englishmen from the British Isles, some by pioneering spirits from the northern and eastern parts of the United States. The bulk of cowboy songs was therefore not created by the cowboys themselves, but were, rather, of cowboy adaptation or adoption. As in other ballad communities, the cowboy adapted the foreign ballad materials to the modes and tastes of his own community. *Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie* is an adaptation of *Ocean Burial*, the latter written by W. H. Saunders. Such examples as *Bonnie Black Bess*, and *Fair Fannie Moore* are immigrants from the Old World, while *Jesse James*, *Betsy Pike*, *The Days of Forty-nine*, and others were brought in from other sections of the United States. In this connection it is well to notice that the pieces which are usually recognized as cowboy improvisations, like *The Old Chisholm Trail*, are inferior to the immigrant poems, and are not ballads at all. The cowboy ballads which possess memorable qualities are those not only which were imported but also those which are most analogous to the ballads of England and Scotland, like *Poor Florella*, *Jesse James*, *The Dying Cowboy*, *The Little Old Sod Shanty*, and *The Lone Prairie*. These various native and imported ballads thrived side by side, subjected to all the imitations and alterations that are to be expected from a people whose literature is oral and not written.

Naturally, those ballads in which we are here interested are those which reflect most characteristically the life of the cowboy. Among the several hundred of cowboy songs and ballads, some are songs of stampedes, of crimes (*Jesse James*, *The Boozer*), and of cowboy deaths (*The Dying Cowboy* and *The Dying Ranger*). Other ballads are shrill, rhythmic yells to hurry on the lagging cattle. When the night watchmen were making their rounds, they would often sing soothing cattle lullabies (*Night-Herding Song*) as they sought to quiet the restless animals and to prevent a stampede. In the cowboy ballads we hear notes of sorrow, of disappointment (*The Disheartened Ranger*), of religion (*The Cowboy at Church*). There are strains of exuberant life and of gloomy, weary days; of rollicking fun and of love. As we read these western songs we see the cowboy hunting; we get glimpses

of him on the trail, now spurring in pursuit of a thief, and now riding leisurely along, silhouetted against the western sunset.

By 1890 the West of the cowboy was beginning to go. Smaller farms were being staked off. By 1910 the cowboy was pushed into the isolated cañons along the Rocky Mountains and down to the remote cattle ranches of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Though for us today the cowboy is receding into the dim past, the picture remaining of him is that of a brave, restless, chivalric, elemental man of the broad open West, dowered with a "primitive and hearty" hospitality, and a singer of songs that will survive many centuries.

In conclusion, whatever the value of these indigenous ballads of the United States as literature may be, we should not forget that in these same ballads we have a picture of isolated communities, such as can be drawn in no other way. These American ballads will become more and more precious as human and historical documents as the years separate us from the conditions which produced them.

CHARACTERISTICS

At the present time we are accustomed to associate with every poem a definite author. His personality stamps the poem, and his name is unmistakably linked with it. We invariably think of the poem as the product of a solitary man sitting quietly in his study, meditating with pen in hand. We have already noted that this is not so with the popular ballad. No author's name is affixed. There are no comments or reflections, no dissections or arguments. Indeed, the first personal pronoun is rarely used, occurring only infrequently in such ballads as *Jamie Douglas*. Impersonality is the foremost quality of the popular ballad. It reflects a group, not an individual. While each individual ballad has about it some special mark or feature, it does not express the personality of the individual, but of a collective interest and sympathy. The absence of subjectivity and self-consciousness is, therefore, the fundamental characteristic of the popular ballads.

The popular ballad is further characterized by rapidity of narrative. Goethe thought that uneducated men have greater skill in the art of saying things compactly than those who are educated.

Ballads are obviously composed to be sung or to be recited by a popular audience. They accordingly adopt the simplest form. What we usually find is a short story in embryo, a song on a single situation. The balladists, whoever they were, did not feel under the necessity of narrating the events that transpired before or after the main incident. Nor did they identify the persons. They rejected a subject which was too complicated or too large. The motives that underlay the action, the ethical code involved, the setting, and the social environment were generally set aside.

Thomas Gray said that the ballad "begins in the fifth act of the play." The ballad is dramatic, as well as lyrical and epical, and pushes breathlessly and vigorously from one stirring episode to another. In the popular ballad there is no elaboration, no reflection as in our sophisticated poetry. The story is unraveled in straight, broad strokes, with simplicity and concreteness. Figures of speech and artificial adornments are generally lacking. The polished, musical diction gives way to words of a rugged, primitive strength. The well-rounded phrase, suggestive of a comprehensive and profound view of life, gives way to narrative flashes and bold, untutored strokes. The story leaps from point to point, oftentimes disregarding logical connection, as between the following two stanzas in *Captain Car*:

I know wher is a gay castle,
Is builded of lyme and stone;
Within their is a gay ladie,
Her lord is riden and gone.

Notice the jump in the narrative between this and the one which follows:

The ladie she lend on her castle-walle,
She loked upp and downe;
There was she ware of an host of men,
Come riding to the towne.

Though the ballad style is simple and unadorned, the ballad itself is not lacking in dignity. It may be sincerely impassioned. The emotional effects are secured by suspense and climax, as in *Lord Randal*. Between the lines of this poem, as in scores of others, we may read a whole series of events which led eventually

to Lord Randal's death. This suggestive power of these old ballads is heightened by the element of frankness and by the seriousness with which the balladist permits the thought and feeling to play upon an incident or series of incidents.

The popular ballads are further characterized by much repetition of words, phrases, and lines. They employ the forms that are ready at hand. We shall find such conventional expressions as "beyond the sea," as in *Sweet William's Ghost*, or "red cock," as in *The Wife of Usher's Well*. Gold is always "red," and ladies "fair." Such lines as "it fell about the Martinmas" and "For sothe as I yow say" appear constantly. In such ballads as *Lord Randal*, *The Hangman's Tree*, and *The Cruel Brother*, words are repeated in a set of stanzas with just enough change or addition to advance the story one step. This is usually called *incremental repetition*. The principle will be easily understood after examining a few stanzas of *The Cruel Brother*:

*One o them was clad in red:
He asked if she wad be his bride.*

*One o them was clad in green:
He asked if she wad be his queen.*

*The last o them was clad in white:
He asked if she wad be his heart's delight.*

Incremental repetition is also common to *Babylon*, *Hind Horn*, *Edward*, *The Twa Sisters*, and *The Wife of Usher's Well*.

Many themes have likewise become conventionalized. The return-from-the-dead theme occurs frequently, as in *Sweet William's Ghost* and *The Wife of Usher's Well*. The lover usually comes out of the west as in *Bonny Barbara Allan*. Bride-stealing furnishes the theme for many ballads, among them *Robin Hood* and *Allan a Dale*. The last-will-and-testament closes numerous pieces. In repeated instances a lover is poisoned by his true love. The envy of a jealous elder sister furnishes the mainspring of action for a number of ballads. There is much dying for love, many suicides committed in order to rejoin the lover in the hereafter. In *Thomas Rymer* appears a much-used theme of a mortal serving the fairies for a period of time, usually seven years. Certain numbers, as three and seven, are particularly preferred.

Many things happen on the third count, as in *The Two Sisters*.

The typical characters in the popular ballads are kings and queens, princesses, ladies, and knights—Lord Randal, King Estmere, Young Hunting, Earl Brand, Edward, Lord Thomas, Lady Maisry, and Percy. The life of these courtly people is conventionalized, and we see the nobility through the eyes of the common people. The ballads usually grace their high-born characters with gold, silver, jewels, and fine, sparkling clothing.

For on every finger she has a ring,
And on the mid-finger she has three,
And there's as meikle goud aboon her brow
As would buy an earldome o lan to me.

Thus appears the lady in *Young Beichan*—literally laden with jewelry. Besides the foregoing, the ballad world is peopled with supernatural beings, mermen, fairies, and elves. The singers of old ballads implicitly believed in these shadowy creatures.

Since popular ballads are the poetry of the folk, primitive and elemental, we find the themes *popular* in the true sense. There is a high regard for loyalty, courage, and a keen delight in a fair fight. Death usually comes by violent means, like shipwreck, battle, personal combat, suicide, drowning, or poison. Whatever the nature of the death, the ballad characters face it bravely and unflinchingly. Cowardice and treachery are condemned; fairness and charity are praised. Tragedy therefore plays a large part, lending to the ballad an undertone of sadness. However, this cheerless outlook is, in the main, far from depressing; on the contrary it is strangely invigorating and refreshing.

The stylistic features of the various folk ballads vary greatly, even if we restrict our observation to the traditional English and Scottish ballads as listed by Professor Child. This variation would become all the more apparent were we to extend our study to Scandinavian, German, Spanish, and American examples. Whatever uniformity that we should observe would usually apply to the ballads evolved by one people within a generation or two of time. Even if we turn to the ballads of England and Scotland, a certain variation occurs. In the English and Scottish pieces, and largely in the American, the couplet lines are used in the older texts, as in *The Two Sisters*:

He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
But he lovd the youngest above a' thing.

He courted the eldest wi brotch an knife,
But lovd the youngest as his life.

The prevailing, as well as the later stanzaic form is that of the quatrain. The term *ballad meter* has come to designate this four-line stanza, composed of four accents in lines one and three, and of three accents in lines two and four, with the second and fourth lines rhyming, as in *Sir Patrick Spens*, *The Bonny Earl of Murray*, *Bessy Bell and Mary Gray*, *Bonny Barbara Allan*, and *Young Waters*. Two stanzas from the last poem run thus:

The queen luikt owre to cartle-wa,
Beheld baith dale and down,
And there she saw Young Waters
Cum riding to the town.

His footmen they did rin before,
His horsemen rade behind;
And mantel of the burning gowd
Did keip him frae the wind.

This ballad measure is one of the easiest and most rapid of English meters, and lends itself best to the singing voice, as may be deduced from an examination of popular hymns, in which the same form is used.

The question and answer method is also a favorite stylistic device. Wherever it appears, it introduces a dramatic intensity, and compresses the narrative to a bare outline. In *Lord Randal* this is particularly noticeable:

"O where ha'e ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
O where ha'e ye been, my handsome, young man?"
"I ha'e been to the wildwood; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain would lie down."

"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome, young man?"
"I dined wi' my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain would lie down."

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?"
"I got eels boiled in brew; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain would lie down."

"What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my son?
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"
"O they swelled and they died; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain would lie down."

"O I fear ye are poisoned, Lord Randal, my son!
O I fear ye are poisoned, my handsome young man!"
"O yes, I am poisoned; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain would lie down."

A few major strokes suffice here. Description and characterization are almost lacking. In fact we form our impression of the characters by their speech and action. The sweetheart is absent; yet as the dialogue advances, the three persons are clearly in mind. The suspicion gradually grows upon the reader until, in the last stanza, the tragic end is clearly revealed.

BROADSIDE BALLADS *

The invention of the printing press in 1474 brought about a great change in the history of the English ballad. People soon took a keen delight in seeing their ballads in print; hence there developed the *Broadside ballads*, or *ballads-in-print*.

The Broadside ballads of the sixteenth century were printed in black letters lengthwise down folio sheets of paper. On some of these woodcuts appeared, designed in such a manner as to catch the popular fancy. In the seventeenth century Roman type began to be used. The Broadside ballads were sold at the printers in wholesale bundles to several types of purchasers, either to the regular ballad-singers or "chaunters" (our present-day newsboys), who sold them in public places for a penny; or to the itinerant chapmen or peddlers, who added the ballads to their saleable stock of threads, laces, cloths, etc., and sold them as they traveled about in villages, farms, and inns. It was not unusual to see all the available wall space in inns covered with these ballads.

* Journalistic or "Ballads in Print."

The Broadside made use of a vast range of sensational matter, actual or fictitious. They dealt with monstrous births, prodigies of various kinds, foreign wars, and outstanding domestic events. The subject of murder played an important rôle. Many ballads were satirical, being directed at any of the current social or economic conditions and at maligned classes. They might partake of the nature of epithalamium, elegy, dirge, tract, or protest. Political ballads were immensely popular between 1642 and 1660, and again at the end of the seventeenth century.

Broadside ballads were introduced in as startling a manner as the case might suggest. One is prefaced by these lines:

A discription of a monstrous chylde, borne at
Chychester in Sussex, the xxiii daye of May.
This being the very length, and bygnes of the
same.

Another invites the reader thus:

As pleasant a dittie as your hart can wish,
Showing what unkindness befell by a kisse.

It will be seen that the Broadside ballad is as much a matter of journalistic as of literary history. Not only have these ballads much in common with the present-day "Yellow" journal; but for the people of the seventeenth century they covered a field since usurped by the newspaper.

Most of these ballads, the work of hack poets, were of a decidedly inferior nature, inartistic in every sense of subject and phrasing. Good taste was violated. Doggerel verse went hand in hand with didacticism; and the result was usually a poetically worthless product. The student of the ballad will do well to turn first to such pieces as *A Description of a Strange Fish*, *A Warning for All Desperate Women*, *The Wreck on the C. and O.*, and *The Fate of John Burgoyne*.

Many of the Broadside ballads were brought to America in the seventeenth century. They have survived to the present day in certain sections of the South. Poems dealing with Floyd Collins and with the Mississippi Flood are among the popular ones in this ballad type. *Casey Jones*, *The Jamestown Flood*, *The Milwaukee Fire*, and *The Battle of Point Pleasant* are well-known examples of the American Broadside ballad.

Generally speaking, the Broadside in England continued as a vehicle for popular verse during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. They were at the height of their popularity in the seventeenth century, during which time 22,000 were numbered and catalogued. The coming of the newspaper in the eighteenth century, such as *Postboy* and *The Daily Courant*, brought on a rapid decline of the Broadside. In the latter part of the eighteenth century they were found only among sailors, farmhands, and the crowds that witnessed executions and prize-fights.

LITERARY BALLAD *

HISTORY

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as we have already noted, were the flowering periods of the popular ballad. During the seventeenth century the Journalistic ballad had in part supplanted the traditional type. During the latter part of the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century the popular ballad suffered eclipse. Addison, Pope, and Johnson could see nothing in the ballad which merited their special favor. They lived in an age of convention, when external rules were the chief concern. The insistence was upon good form, precise measure, and diction. Reason and judgment were emphasized. The rules of the game were rigidly upheld, and strict discipline was the order of this formal age. In such an atmosphere, the popular ballad naturally could claim but little consideration.

As early as 1724 a change was already discernible. In that year Allan Ramsay published his *Tea-Table Miscellany* and *The Evergreen*, collections of Scottish verse, ballads being among the number. In 1760 James Macpherson published what supposedly were *Fragments of Poetry translated from the Gaelic and Erse Languages*. These were received with enthusiasm and widespread interest. The publication of Bishop Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765 marks the beginning of a genuine revival of interest in early popular ballads. This work aided in precipitating Romanticism, not only in England, but in France and Germany as well. In England, Thomas Gray's interest in Icelandic and Celtic poetry and in medieval life stimulated new

* Also known as *Imitation*, *Artistic*, or *Modern* ballad.

inquiries into the literature of the past. Oliver Goldsmith's humanitarianism and William Cowper's reaction against pseudo-classic forms gave further impetus to the slowly returning interest in the spontaneous "literature" of common people. Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1770) and Cowper's *John Gilpin* (1785) are forerunners of the changing vogue in narrative literary art; both did much in preparing the way for the reinstatement of the ballad. Thomas Chatterton's *The Rowley Poems* (1764) and James Beattie's *The Minstrel* show interest in the ballad type, and pointed out to many readers the charm inherent in the old ballad form. The Romantic movement itself lent great support to ballad revival with its return to common life, to things of wonder and mystery, to the medieval, and to a courting of the stimulating effects which come through sense impressions. The writers again turned for their literary material to medieval legend with its haunted castles, stolen damsels, supernatural beings, and dark portents. With Romanticism came a return to simplicity, to nature, and to the free impulses of the heart. The complex and artificial in life and literature gave way to naturalness and the naïve.

Another important step toward ballad revival is marked by the publication in 1798 of *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge. This volume departs definitely from the eighteenth century tradition. In the preface to the second edition in 1800 Wordsworth declares: "The principal object then, in these poems, was to choose incidents from common life, or to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them truly, though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature,—chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen—the language, too, of these men has been adopted—because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society, and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and emotions

in simple and unelaborated expressions." A writer with such a poetic creed would naturally be a friend of the popular ballad. From this time forward the ballad became a popular form of poetry.

Sir Walter Scott's interest in the past and in the more picturesque aspects of human life turned him to the poetry of the unlettered. Among other activities, he became an indefatigable collector of popular ballads. His energy in this field resulted in the publication of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in 1802.

The popular ballad then had been completely reinstated in favor by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its influence upon subsequent artistic literature was immediate and profound. Among other things, it has turned poetic narrative toward simplicity in theme and form. Narrative poems came into favor. Many poets sought to imitate the artistry of the traditional ballads. Scott succeeded admirably in *The Eve of St. John*, *Rosabelle* (from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*), and *Lochinvar* (the song of Lady Heron in *Marmion*). The reader may care to compare the latter piece with *Katharine Jaffray*, the source of Scott's poem. While the spirit in both ballads is the same, still the first stanza of each reveals some differences. *Katharine Jaffray* begins:

There lives a lass in yonder dale,
And down in yonder glen, O
And Katharine Jaffray was her name,
Well known by many men, O.

Lochinvar opens thus:

Oh! Young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none.
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the Young Lochinvar.

Scott's stanza is in the more appropriate anapestic couplet, especially adapted to action. The rival lovers in *Lochinvar* are more sharply contrasted and characterized. The reader is made to feel that Lochinvar deserves the bride while the English lover is unworthy of her. The concluding moral in the older poem is omitted by Scott. We are conscious of a superior artistry in *Lochinvar*;

the versification is surer and the rhythmical harmony more delightful.

Robert Southey's *The Well of St. Keyne* uses the ballad measure, and otherwise resembles the popular ballad very closely; but the hand of the individual artist is again evident in the organization of material, in the clever ordering of lines, and in the humor which comes at the close.

A well there is in the West country,
And a clearer one never was seen;
There is not a wife in the West country
But has heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm tree stand beside,
And behind does an ash-tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne;
Joyfully he drew nigh,
For from cock-crow he had been travelling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he,
And he sat down upon the bank,
Under the willow-tree.

There came a man from the house hard by
At the well to fill his pail;
On the well-side he rested it,
And he bade the stranger hail.

"Now art thou a bachelor, stranger?" quoth he,
"For an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drank this day
That ever thou didst in thy life.

"Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast
Ever here in Cornwall been?
For an if she have, I'll venture my life
She has drunk of the Well of St. Keyne."

"I have left a good woman who never was here,"
 The stranger he made reply;
 "But that my draught should be the better for that,
 I pray you answer me why."

"St. Keyne," quoth the Cornishman, "many a time
 Drank of this crystal well,
 And before the Angel summoned her
 She laid on the water a spell.

"If the Husband of this gifted well
 Shall drink before his Wife,
 A happy man thenceforth is he,
 For he shall be Master for life.

"But if the Wife should drink of it first,
 God help the Husband then!"
 The stranger stooped to the Well of St. Keyne,
 And drank of the waters again.

"You drank of the well, I warrant, betimes?"
 He to the Cornishman said.
 But the Cornishman smiled as the stranger spake,
 And sheepishly shook his head.

"I hastened, as soon as the wedding was done,
 And left my wife in the porch.
 But i' faith, she had been wiser than me,
 For she took a bottle to Church."

Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, Burns' *Kellyburn Braes*, Wordsworth's *Lucy Gray*, Robert Southey's *The Inchcape Rock*, Longfellow's *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, Buchanan's *The Ballad of Judas Iscariot*, and Masefield's *The Yarn of the Loch Achray*—all have in them something of the traditional ballad spirit and form and should be read with this in mind. They employ consciously some of the devices and mannerisms of the old ballad.

CHARACTERISTICS

Even a cursory reading of the foregoing examples will reveal the chief characteristics of the literary ballad. It is the product of a single individual. Into it have gone his own thoughts, his

eccentricities of style, and a certain degree of his personality. His name is ever associated with his product. The poem undergoes no changes, once it leaves his hands, except such as he himself may later care to make. Since the literary ballad is the result of a conscious, premeditated endeavor, it is more finished than the popular ballad. The motives are more evident, and the outlook upon the world more comprehensive. Artificiality, false sentiment, and oversophistication are more likely to be found in the literary ballad. In straining after plan and finish, it sacrifices the freshness and spontaneity that is such a delightful quality of the older form. The throb of the multitude is gone; the supernatural elements have also largely disappeared, except in such excellent examples like Rossetti's *The White Ship* and *Sister Helen*, Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*, Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and Alfred Noyes' *The Admiral's Ghost*. The ballad stanza, furthermore, has been supplanted, for the most part, by forms of a more complicated and, oftentimes, more appropriate nature. The singing voice that was so inseparably linked with the traditional ballads is only now and then faintly audible. The common folk would have no desire to memorize or to sing most of the literary ballads, even were that feat possible.

In considering the artistic excellencies of the literary ballads, we should not forget that they owe a great debt to the older poems. The traditional ballads furnished the setting and characters for many of the later pieces. *Sir Patrick Spens* has had a more or less perceptible influence upon Longfellow's *Wreck of the Hesperus*, Masfield's *The Yarn of the Loch Achray*, and Rossetti's *The White Ship*. Echoes of *The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry* are heard in Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*. Keats was mindful of *Thomas Rymer* and *Clark Colven* when he wrote *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Wordsworth's *Lucy Gray*, Tennyson's *Lady Clare*, Kipling's *Danny Deevee*, and Yeats' *Father Gilligan* are also reminiscent of old ballad pieces.

There is not the same uniformity in theme and form among the literary ballads which we have noticed in the popular ballads. Indeed, so great a variation obtains that it is difficult to determine just where the literary ballad ends and some other narrative forms begin. Scott's *Marmion*, Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*, and Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* fall into this borderland of classification. The same difficulty confronts the clas-

sifier in much of the nineteenth century narrative poetry. The predominating tone, form, and theme must in such instances be the determining factors.

Certain elements which held a subordinate place in the popular ballad have become dominating features in the literary ballads. This is in part due to the average greater length of the latter, but mostly to the desire on the part of the author to be effective and entertaining. Consider the romantic atmosphere in Scott's *The Eve of St. John*, the shuddering gloom in Kipling's *Danny Deever*, the passionate love in Noyes' *The Highwayman*, and the wild alarm in Robinson's *The Return of Morgan and Fingal*. Parody of a suicide-for-love theme is the obvious motive of Thomas Hood's *Faithless Nelly Gray*. Holmes had in mind Dana's *Buccaneer* and such an old ballad as *Sweet William's Ghost* when he wrote his humorous *The Specter Pig*. Charles Kingsley had a didactic purpose in writing *The Three Fishers* as did Oscar Wilde in writing *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Wilde's denouncement of social inequalities is perfectly clear to the reader. The writer of the literary ballads is then more restrictive in his objective. He wishes to achieve a certain very definite goal, and he uses the devices which will most likely insure his success.

The casual reader will find among the literary ballads a score of entertaining poems. Everyone likes to read a good story told in a lively meter. If it is action that you want, turn to Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West*. Its galloping meter and thrilling plot will grip you. If you delight in the sound of battle and the clash of arms, read Browning's *Hervé Riel*, Rossetti's *The King's Tragedy*, or Tennyson's *The Revenge*. Should the strange or the inexplicable delight you, select Rossetti's *Sister Helen*, Davidson's *A Ballad of Hell*, and Morris' *Shameful Death*. You will find peculiarly engaging the element of pathos in Yeats' *The Ballad of Moll Magee* and Campbell's *Lord Ullin's Daughter*. Whatever your predilections may be, you will find among the literary ballads captivating narratives that will afford you many a pleasant hour.

QUESTIONS

1. Compare *The Maid Freed from the Gallows* with Rossetti's *Sister Helen* in structure.

2. What personal characteristics do Jesse James and Robin Hood have in common?
3. In what respects does *The Wife of Bath's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* resemble the popular ballad, *Kemp Owyne*?
4. According to the popular ballad, *The Farmer's Curs't Wife*, what was Burns' motive in writing *Kellyburn Braes*?
5. What similarities do you notice in *Sir Patrick Spens* and Rossetti's *The White Ship*? In *Thomas Rymer* and Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*?
6. Enumerate the ballad characteristics which you notice in reading *Cowboy Songs* by John A. Lomax.
7. What suggestions did Arnold get from *The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry* for his writing of *The Forsaken Merman*?
8. What influence, if any, did *Child Maurice* have upon Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*?
9. Read any five popular ballads. What common traits do they have?
10. What is the typical attitude of the popular balladist toward wealth, rulers, outlaws, love, and death?
11. What are the chief passions depicted in the popular ballads?
12. Make a study of the element of superstition as it is used in the popular ballads and in the literary ballads.
13. Read the American ballads, *Johnny Sands* and *Calomel*, and the English ballads, *The Farmer's Curs't Wife* and *Get Up and Bar the Door*. What elemental differences in the portrayal of humor do you observe?
14. Contrast the story of King Leir and his Three Daughters as presented in the old ballad by that title with that found in Shakespeare's play.
15. Why is the type of popular ballad written in the United States of necessity different from that written in England?
16. In what respects is *A Gest of Robin Hood* different from the other single popular ballads?
17. Point out all the old ballad elements you can find in Southey's *The Well of St. Keyne* and in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.
18. What departures from the old ballad form do you notice in Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*?

19. Make a study of the motives and mood underlying *The Hunting of the Cheviot* and Tennyson's *The Charge of the Heavy Brigade*.
20. How do the popular balladists and the literary balladists handle the supernatural theme? Consult, in this connection, *Sweet William's Ghost* and Rossetti's *Sister Helen*.
21. Read at random ten ballads from John A. Lomax's *Cowboy Songs*. Reconstruct the life of the cowboy as you see it in these ballads.
22. Read Davidson's *A Ballad of Heaven* and the old ballad, *Bonny Barbara Allan*. What differences are there in the respective treatments of pathos?
23. Make a study of the literary ballad of action as exemplified in Browning's *How They Brought the Good News*, Kipling's *Ballad of East and West*, Noyes' *The Highwayman*, and Read's *Sheridan's Ride*.
24. Clip from the daily newspaper several articles that would serve as bases for ballads.
25. Read the following ballads in Franz Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy: Jack Haggerty's Flat River Girl, Gerry's Rocks, Jim Whalen, The Banks of the Little Eau Pleine, and The Shanty-Boy on the Big Eau Claire*. Contrast the characters in these ballads with those found in the typical English popular ballads.

English Popular Ballads:

Bessy Bell and Mary Gray
 Babylon, or, The Bonnie Banks o' Fordie
 Banks o' Yarrow, The
 Battle of Otterburn, The
 Bonnie George Campbell
 Bonny Barbara Allan
 Clerk Colven
 Cruel Brother, The
 Daemon Lover, The
 Douglas Tragedy, The
 Edom o' Gordon, or Captain Car
 Edward
 Fair Margaret and Sweet William
 Farmer's Curs't Wife, The

Flodden Field
Gay Goshawk, The
Get Up and Bar the Door
Helen of Kirkconnell
Hind Horn
Hugh of Lincoln
Johnie Armstrong
Katharine Jaffray
Kemp Owyne
King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid
King Leir and his Three Daughters
Lamkin
Lord Randal
Lord Thomas and Fair Annet
Maid Freed from the Gallows, The
Mary Hamilton
Nut-brown Maid, The
Robin Hood and Allan a Dale
Robin Hood's Death and Burial
Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne
Robin Hood Rescuing the Widow's Three Sons
Robin Hood and the Potter
Sir Patrick Spens
St. Stephen and Herod
Sweet William's Ghost
Three Ravens, The
Twa Brothers, The
Twa Corbies, The
Twa Sisters, The
Young Waters
The Wife of Usher's Well

American Popular and Journalistic Ballads:

Aged Indian, The
Atlantic Cable, The
Banks of Claudy, The
Battle of Bridgewater, The
Beside the Kennebec
Billy Grimes, the Drover
Bold Hawthorne

Broncho Versus Bicycle
Calomel
Charles Guiteau, or James A. Garfield
Constitution and the Guerriere, The
Cowboy and the Maid, The
Death of Bendall, The
Dying Cowboy, The
Enterprise and Boxer
Expedition to Long Island, The
Fair Fannie Moore
Fatal Oak, The
Fate of John Burgoyne, The
Flying Cloud, The
Gol-Darned Wheel, The
Guy Read
Jack Donahoo
Jackie Fraisure
Jack Haggerty's Flat River Girl
Jam at Gerry's Rocks, The
James Bird
Jesse James
Jim Whalen
John Murphy, or, On the Banks of the Little Eau Pleine
Johnny Sands
Lorilla
Lovewell's Fight
My Bonny Black Bess
Nathan Hale
O Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie
Old Man Who Lived in the Woods, The
Old Shawnee, The
Poor Omie
Prentice Boy's Love for Mary, The
Pretty Fair Maiden, A
Sam Bass
Shanty-Boy on the Big Eau Claire, The
Silver Jack
Silver Dagger
Sioux Indians
Soldier's Poor Little Boy, The

Tory Ballad, A
 Three Rogues, The
 Wexford Girl, The
 William Hall
 Will the Weaver
 Wreck on the C. and O., The
 Young Charlotte
 Zebra Dun, The

English Literary Ballads:

Michael Drayton: The Battle of Agincourt
 John Gay: A Ballad
 William Cowper: John Gilpin
 Robert Burns: Duncan Gray
 William Wordsworth: Lucy Gray, or Solitude
 Sir Walter Scott: Lochinvar
 Jock o' Hazeldean
 Rosabelle
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
 Robert Southey: The Well of St. Keyne
 Lord Byron: The Destruction of Sennacherib
 John Keats: La Belle Dame Sans Merci
 Alfred Tennyson: The Revenge
 The Charge of the Light Brigade
 Robert Browning: Hervé Riel
 How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix
 Charles Kingsley: The Three Fishers
 The Sands of Dee
 Matthew Arnold: The Forsaken Merman
 Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The King's Tragedy
 Sister Helen
 Troy Town
 The White Ship
 William Morris: The Gilliflower of Gold
 John Davidson: A Ballad of Hell
 A Ballad of Heaven
 A Runnable Stag
 Oscar Wilde: The Ballad of Reading Gaol
 William Butler Yeats: The Ballad of Moll Magee

Rudyard Kipling: Ballad of East and West
 Danny Deever
 The Ballad of Fisher's Boarding-House
 Stephen Phillips: The Apparition
 John Masefield: The Yarn of the Loch Achray
 Harbour Bar
 Alfred Noyes: The Highwayman
 The Admiral's Ghost

Supplementary List of English Literary Ballads:

Thomas Campbell: Lord Ullin's Daughter
 Earl March Look'd on His Dying Child
 Sir John Suckling: A Ballad Upon a Wedding
 John Gay: Sweet William's Farewell to Black-Eyed Susan
 William Cowper: The Castaway
 Thomas Chatterton: An Excellent Ballad of Charitie
 The Bristowe Tragedy
 Robert Burns: Kellyburn Braes
 The De'il's awa wi' the Exciseman
 Sir Walter Scott: The Outlaw
 The Maid of Neidpath
 The Rover
 Bonny Dundee
 Proud Maisie
 The Eve of St. John
 Robert Southey: The Inchcape Rock
 The Battle of Blenheim
 Thomas Hood: The Dream of Eugene Aram
 Faithless Nelly Gray
 Thomas Babington Macaulay: Horatius at the Bridge
 The Battle of the Lake Regillus
 The Prophecy of Capys
 Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Lay of the Brown Rosary
 Rime of the Duchess May
 Alfred Tennyson: The May Queen
 In the Children's Hospital
 The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava
 Lord Burleigh
 Lady Clare
 William Makepeace Thackeray: The Ballad of Bouillabaisse

- Sidney T. Dobell: The Ballad of Keith of Ravelston
 Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Eden Bower
 Staff and Scrip
 Stratton Water
 William Morris: Winter Weather
 Shameful Death
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: The Winds
 The Witch-Mother
 A Jacobite's Farewell
 Robert Buchanan: Judas Iscariot
 Robert Bridges: Screaming Tarn
 Alfred Edward Housman: "Farewell to Barn and Stack and Tree"
 Henry Newbolt: He Fell Among Thieves
 William Butler Yeats: The Fiddler of Dooney
 The Ballad of Father Gilligan
 The Ballad of the Foxhunter
 Rudyard Kipling: Tommy
 The Gift of the Sea
 The Last Suttee
 Fuzzy-Wuzzy
 Walter De La Mare: The Listeners
 John Masefield: Burial Party
 Bill
 The Turn of the Tide
 James Elroy Flecker: The Ballad of Iskander

American Literary Ballads:

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: The Wreck of the Hesperus
 Skeleton in Armor
 John Greenleaf Whittier: Maud Muller
 Skipper Ireson's Ride
 Edgar Allan Poe: The Haunted Palace
 Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Ballad of the Oysterman
 James Russell Lowell: The Singing Leaves
 Walt Whitman: Come Up from the Fields, Father
 Francis Orrery Ticknor: Little Giffen
 Lucy Larcom: Hannah Binding Shoes
 John Hay: Jim Bludso
 Francis Bret Harte: Dow's Flat

Sidney Lanier: The Revenge of Hamish
Eugene Field: The Captain's Daughter
Edwin Arlington Robinson: The Return of Morgan and
Fingal
Vachel Lindsay: Aladdin and the Jinn
The Broncho that Would not be Broken
Ezra Pound: Ballad of the Goodly Fere

Supplementary list of American Literary Ballads:

Francis Hopkinson: The Battle of the Kegs
Fitz-Greene Halleck: Marco Bozzaris
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Sir Humphrey Gilbert
John Greenleaf Whittier: The Pipes of Lucknow
The Exiles
Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Specter Pig
Thomas Buchanan Read: Sheridan's Ride
George Henry Boker: A Ballad of Sir John Franklin
Thaddeus Oliver: The Picket-Guard
Francis Bret Harte: The Society Upon the Stanislaus
Constance Fenimore Woolson: The Grenadiers
Joaquin Miller: Kit Carson's Ride
Columbus
Sidney Lanier: The Ballad of Trees and the Master
James Whitcomb Riley: Little Orphant Annie
The Old Man and Jim

CHAPTER V

EPIC

THERE are very few examples of successful epics in English literature. Only the tenth, the seventeenth, and the twentieth centuries claim, each, a notable epic. We cannot altogether account for this rarity of epic production; for genius smiles at generalization and appears with its product in the most unlooked-for times and places. Undoubtedly many poets have been deterred from attempting such work by their inability to measure up to the exacting requirements which epic poetry demands, such as the summing up comprehensively of an entire age or social movement. Other poets have been unable to endure the sustained constructive effort involved. The epic is the most prodigious form of poetry that man has ever created. It imposes upon the poet a task which only the few can perform satisfactorily.

HISTORY

The first extant epic to challenge our attention in English literature is *Beowulf*, the product of the Anglo-Saxon age (449-1066). This age was a period of settlement and race migration. Britain was the scene of constant warfare, especially so between 449 and 827. Such a fusion of races as was then in progress few other countries have experienced. In this welter of heroic conflict, the interest in epic material was natural and inevitable. Living conditions fostered the recital and accumulation of heroic lays, which lays, we believe, furnished the basis for later epics. That there were a number of epics in existence during the Anglo-Saxon period is evinced by such remnants as *The Fight at Finnsburg*, *Widsith*, *Waldere*, and *Deor's Lament*. Unfortunately, only one example, *Beowulf*, has come down to us in completed form.

With the coming of the Normans in 1066 the development of powerful principalities within the state was checked; and the

feudalization of the English institutions began. A more centralized government was established. Political, mercantile, and industrial corporations were formed; and great universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge, were founded. Crusades arose, and with them a chivalry which represented an ideal code of morals and etiquette for the knight. The dominant figure of the knight might have furnished subjects for epic composition; but what narrative literature reflected this important figure took on a romantic quality, quite foreign to the epical idea.

The conditions during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were likewise unfavorable to epic composition. The submerged element of the population was engaged in a prolonged struggle for recognition. Chivalry waned and feudalism disappeared. These centuries witnessed the decline and slow corruption of the church. What literature was written partook more of a theological and critical nature, except for the ballads and the miracle and mystery plays.

The sixteenth century presented conditions which might have inspired epic production. The poets should have been stimulated by the growth of nationalism, by the discovery of new worlds, and by the expansion of England to the foremost world power; but the efforts of the most gifted poets were expended upon dramas. What narrative poetry was written took the form of medieval romances. Though Shakespeare took great pains with *Venus and Adonis*, the drama represents the flowering and fruition of his genius.

The seventeenth century might not at first thought seem propitious for a great epic poet. The century experienced political and religious upheavals. Disillusionment and sadness prevailed. The arrogance of King James, the beheading of Charles I, the establishment of the Commonwealth, the rise of Whig and Tory, the restoration of Charles II, the intense religious ferment, the birth of experimental science—all give evidence of the factious unrest of the period. The theological controversies of the times, above all, cannot be overlooked; for out of these came indirectly Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, strangely though very perceptibly tempered by the intense disputatious nature of the century that gave them birth.

The eighteenth century was an age which enthroned Reason, the thought being dominated by materialism and skepticism.

The energy of the masses was directed into the fields of agriculture and manufacturing. There was a marked social advance, but a consequent deterioration of ethical standards. The strict adherence to external forms in matters of society and art induced a love for satire and clever conversation. Nationalism was not intense enough to fire the poet's spirit to great epic production.

The poets of the nineteenth century were introspective; they were intent upon revealing their own personalities in what they wrote. This made for good lyric poetry, but was ill suited to the composition of a narrative poem of epic grandeur; for in the epic the poet must take on the group consciousness. The triumph of romanticism in the beginning of the century brought with it temperamental and imaginative excesses, liberalism in literature, and an increased interest in sense impressions. There was a return to nature, and a revival of the medieval spirit. The period was preoccupied with the common everyday life of the emotions, leaving little place for that panoramic intellectual quality so essential to epic inception. In the latter part of the century democracy came into its own, social readjustments were being made, interest in the arts and sciences gave to the period a cultural trend, and idealism permeated both the moral and religious life. The popularization of education, together with the rapid progress in scientific knowledge superimposed upon the times a certain social and religious unrest. In a period fervently intent upon exploring and liberating the individual, the epic sense is likely to be somewhat removed from serious consideration. Tennyson approached the epic form in his *Idylls of the King*, as did also Morris in *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*. It remained, however, for the twentieth century again to give us examples of epics which, while they may not be placed side by side with the greatest English epics, are nevertheless meritorious of passing consideration, namely, in England, Alfred Noyes' *Drake* and, in America, Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body*.

CHARACTERISTICS

The epic has certain general characteristics which readily differentiate it from the other types. Whether we are considering

the *folk* epic (see p. 132) or the *literary* epic (see p. 143), the same general purpose inspired both.

The poet may derive his epic theme from legend, as in *Beowulf*; from religion, as in *Paradise Lost*; or from history, as in *Drake*. History, as a source, is very likely to restrict the poet unduly; for if the details of what actually happened are familiarly known to the readers, the historical episodes cannot so easily be rearranged to suit the writer's purpose; and, accordingly, the flight of the poet's imagination is certain to be checked.

Whatever the source may be, the epic poet generally selects some outstanding story which has become a part of the life of the people. That is, the chief episode must appeal to the imagination of a wide circle of readers and must give them the feeling that in that one underlying action they are all akin. The poet may embellish the original material; he may conjure up ever so many side events; but the central subject must stand out prominently if the poem is to have a broad national significance. Having then selected a familiar background, against which he can project his poem, the epic poet endeavors to give free play to his imagination and to present the deeds and adventures of heroic or supernatural beings as his fancy may direct, at the same time striving to give his narrative as much of the air of actuality as the situation will permit.

In the epic is found crystallized the contribution which a great religion or nation has given to civilization. The epic mirrors the entire spirit of an age. It does this, not by interpreting the bare facts of life, but by re-creating them. There is present in the process not a mere shuffling around of material, but an imaginative transfiguration. The group point of view in the epic is more pronounced than in any other narrative type. The poet saturates himself, as it were, with the existing material, allies himself with the spirit of his day and with the peoples of his time, and then presents the whole in emotional and spiritual values. The result is that this summation of the age, together with the heroic sweep, transcends the age, lifting the people which it represents to a deeper realization of their place in the world. This lofty generality an epic must have, even though it revolve about the exploits of some national hero, as Odysseus in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied*. Usually the deeds of heroic or supernatural

beings are, consciously or unconsciously, the embodiment of some national ideal. Achilles and Odysseus, for example, in Homer's epics, become the expression of the Hellenic consciousness of race. They and their men typify the spirit of war and adventure which characterized all Greece.

There is in man's nature a desire for vastness. He is eager to ally himself with some great force or movement which thereby gives meaning to his being and satisfies a universal craving for perpetuity. The epic appeases that hunger which craves for historical or religious sweep, and ministers to that element of human nature which delights in losing oneself in the abyss of thought and space. The conflict in the epic between two opposing forces is likewise typical of the same conflict between good and evil which is constantly being waged in man's individual life.

A story with the proportions of an epic must be peopled by characters capable of supporting it. The personalities that move through the epic narrative are finely conceived. They are of noble birth and lofty station, more often mighty heroes, demigods, or celestial beings. Though portrayed in greatly magnified form, they must still retain enough of the human being to make their passions intelligible to men. Elemental passions, while exhibited, are kept on a high plane, so as to be consistent with the general tone of the epic. For this reason the epic is apt to be lacking in variety and individuality. The generally exalted nature of the characters has a tendency, therefore, to place all epic personalities on a common superior and supernatural level.

Superhuman characters require, in turn, a superhuman machinery. In this respect, the epic poet is permitted any range in time or place, his only limitation being the ability of the reader to comprehend.

The theme of epic narrative is often expressed in the first few lines, as in *Paradise Lost*:

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.

The action in the typical epic then rises by a series of martial or spiritual exploits to its height. The chosen hero or leading

characters fulfill the divine or national destiny; and the poem closes with the significance of their activities clearly implanted in the reader's mind.

English epics are usually written in blank verse. The diction, dignified and impressive, is borne along by a powerful, flowing meter. The story is told in broad, bold strokes; for epic largeness must be conveyed, not only in the story, but also in the manner of telling. Trivial incidents are excluded, unless they have a special bearing upon the outcome, in which instance they are treated as being of some significance. Greatness of scope and majesty of incident must rely primarily upon the narrative art of the poet for their effectiveness; the magnanimity in theme must be counterbalanced by loftiness in verse structure.

FOLK EPICS *

There are two leading kinds of epics, *folk* epics and *literary* epics. Folk epics were originally songs or lays. These lays were handed down orally from one poet or bard to another, all the while undergoing change. Eventually one single bard welded these accumulated lays into one single epic poem. A folk epic is therefore, in a sense, the work of a number of poets. Literary epics do not develop in this way. They are from first to last the work of a single poet.

Folk epics are the outgrowth of an Heroic Age, and reflect the people and living conditions of that Age. It is usually preceded by the savage state of society, in which the individual savage is merged with the tribal consciousness and moves with it as a body. The tribe passes on to the Heroic Age as soon as the individual discovers himself and strives to assert his individuality. The Heroic Age is one of action, a period of turbulence and family feuds, a time when heroes live and chieftains exert considerable authority. The people live simply and enjoy the wide individual freedom possible for such a society. While the form of government is essentially aristocratic, there is not the spirit of condescension on the part of those in authority. The leaders of the tribe are such by virtue of their prowess in war; or they have demonstrated their wisdom as judges. When

* The following terms are also used to designate this type of epic: *Epics of Growth*, *Racial Epics*, *Authentic Epics*, and *Popular Epics*.

the warriors in the Heroic Age are not fighting, they are feasting, glorying in their victories and anticipating future achievements. The moral code of the Heroic Age is based upon the assertion of individuality. A good man is one who is active, successful, and powerful; an evil man, one who is lazy, weak, and ugly. Where such a vehement individualism is paramount, there is a tendency for the strong men to fight and kill one another. This elimination, in turn, brings into prominence some one chieftain who in prowess is supreme. The period is short-lived; and the peoples pass to the next stage in their march toward civilization.

Such an Heroic Age as that described in the preceding paragraph, existed between the fourth and seventh centuries A.D. when the Anglo-Saxon forefathers of the English people lived on the shores of Scandinavia, Denmark, and Holland. The tribal villages were usually established on some high point not far from the water's edge. Each tribe was ruled by a chieftain, who exerted his authority with the ready consent of the tribal members. They lived by plundering, fishing, and by what little the soil yielded. Theirs was a primitive living condition; and their life was one of constant danger and hardship. They looked for no favors from Nature. Though, for them, life was shrouded in mystery, they faced it fearlessly. They possessed a keen sense of family and of tribal solidarity, and were ever loyal to their chieftain. In turn for their services they received protection, living quarters, food, and, as the time afforded, gifts of various kinds. At the banquets the warriors were entertained by the tribal bard, who sang or recited the glorious feats of the heroes of the tribe. This praise naturally incited the hearers to emulate the deeds of their illustrious ancestors.

It is to the bard, or *Scop*, who presented his lays at these festive boards, that we owe the beginning of those heroic narratives out of which eventually grew our English folk epic, *Beowulf*. These lays were always sung or recited to the accompaniment of the harp, usually before the open fire in the hall, for the entertainment of the host's household and, sometimes, his guests. By such means a primitive people were mightily aided in their progress toward a higher civilization.

We are not certain as to the exact nature of this Heroic poetry

in its original form. The poetry which the Heroic Age evolved was, however, about its own life and people. This might include at times an admission of its failures as well as an extolment of its successes. Just how these heroic lays were gradually fused into one epic whole we are unable to say. It would appear that in the very beginning some hero's prowess was put into easy-flowing, metrical narrative, thereby facilitating memorization. Succeeding poets, inheriting this lay, would not only improve upon it, but extend and magnify the prowess of the hero until, with time, the feats became superhuman in their proportions. We may readily understand that with the receding of the hero more and more into the dim past, and with no written records available to check their imagination, the bards added whatever episodes pleased their fancy and whatever drew from the attendant nobles the desired applause. A succession of bards, each inheriting the enhanced tradition from his immediate predecessor, would eventually leave a series of lays, which if preserved until written down, would furnish the material for an epic poem. It is but natural to suppose that the tradition, thus bequeathed from bard to bard, would, in its final form, vary from the original.

These heroic lays waited for the eye of some individual poet, who, if properly inspired, would take this fragmentary, scattered, loosely arranged material and, having saturated himself with it, would create a single, unified poem. If he was of the temperament that could see through all these related lays some magnificent symbolism of human destiny, some transcendent purpose and plan that relates man to the heroic story in its more sublime aspects, the result would be a folk epic, such as the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the French *Song of Roland*, the German *Nibelungenlied*, and the English *Beowulf*. After the poet gave to posterity such a consummate poem, the fragments from which he derived his inspiration would be gradually forgotten and ultimately lost. The folk epic, while in its final form the product of one mind, is still the work of many, in so far as the work of previous bards doubtless became a part of the consciousness of him who gave final form to the whole work. These earlier bards contributed on their spirit, imagination, and even style of expression.

BEOWULF

We have just considered the general conditions under which *Beowulf* came into being. Let us now inquire into the specific historical background of the poem. The story of *Beowulf* goes back to the first half of the sixth century. According to the *Historia Francorum* of Gregory of Tours, there was an historical Beowulf, a Geät, nephew to Hygelac. Sometime between A.D. 512 and 520 Hygelac (Chochilaicus), then leader of the tribe of Geäts (who lived on the island of Öland in southern Sweden), raided the Hetware (Attuarii), then living near the mouth of the Rhine on the Frisian shore. While returning to his ships with the captured slaves and spoils, he was overtaken by Theodoric. In the encounter which followed Hygelac was slain. Beowulf distinguished himself in this battle, and was the only warrior who escaped. The scene in *Beowulf* shifts between the Danish island of Seeland and the country of the Geäts or Goths, in what is now the southern part of Sweden. The scenery which dominates in *Beowulf* is typical of the coasts of Denmark and Sweden. The climate also is suggestive of this same locality. The somber and sad feeling that pervades the poem is that which a northern landscape might engender.

While these historical events were in progress, the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were constantly crossing the sea to England. It is well known that by the seventh century this Scandinavian exodus to England had practically ceased, and that the three tribes were definitely settled in their new home. The lays of which the epic, *Beowulf*, is composed are thought to have been in currency among these people before they left their Scandinavian home and to have been brought to England by belated Angles. They probably reached something like the present epic proportions of *Beowulf* before 650.

Though pagans at their arrival, these tribes were converted toward the end of the sixth century. The first missionaries came from Ireland, among them Saint Columba. Saint Augustine, who came to the island in 597 from Rome, was, however, by far the more important of the two missionaries. The first dated writings appeared about a hundred years later. By the time that these appeared, the civilization had already progressed to a point where a stable society was established, with organized

villages and community life. The people tilled the soil; they had evolved a code of ethics, and a hierarchical society in which organized justice and democratic institutions played a happy part. Although these early settlers had brought with them from their former home a religion founded upon various myths, the names of deities and ancient rites, associated with this mythical religion, had almost disappeared when *Beowulf* was written. Only traces were here and there to be found. The coming of the Christian monks had eliminated the savage customs and substituted for them the rudiments of Christianity.

Beowulf is closely related to the other Anglo-Saxon poems in language, imagination, and feeling. In general, the Anglo-Saxon poems that have been preserved were written or edited by Christian monks, who lived from the seventh to the eleventh century. These poems are therefore essentially a Christian literature, and not a primitive product. However, like *Widsith* and *Deor*, *Beowulf* preserves many of the pagan traditions. The clerks who edited the Anglo-Saxon literature were of Anglo-Saxon descent, and still had burning in their consciousness the desire for adventure, and a passion for the robust life of their ancestors. This fact explains why, when writing *Beowulf*, they returned to the spirit of their Viking and barbaric forefathers and recounted the story in much of its pagan glamour. At the same time their monastic affiliations led them to impregnate the story with Christian sentiments. The singular but interesting interlacing of heathen ideas with Christian conceptions, which the poem displays, is to be explained on this basis. Hand in hand with the Christian resignation to the Will of God there goes the reminiscence of Wyrd or Fate.

Structurally, *Beowulf* contains four episodes: (1) Beowulf's arrival in the land of Hrothgar, and his fight with Grendel; (2) Beowulf's fight with Grendel's mother; (3) Beowulf's return to the Geäts and his subsequent reign of fifty years; and (4) the fight with the Fire-Drake and the Beowulf's death.

If we omit the interpolations of the minstrels, the main story of *Beowulf* can be told briefly: Hrothgar, king of the Danes, has built an incomparable banquet hall, called Mead-Hall or Heorot, in which he feasts his warriors and distributes gifts. Grendel, a monster, begins to raid the Hall by night, and continues his ravages until thirty thanes have lost their lives. There-

upon Heorot is abandoned; and for twelve years Grendel terrorizes the people. Hearing of Hrothgar's plight, Beowulf, with fourteen companions, comes to his aid. The King receives them with joy. At the banquet which follows, the envious Unferth, the King's adviser, seeks to humiliate Beowulf by a recital of his supposed failure in the swimming match with Breca. This has the added effect of bringing to Beowulf's mind a consciousness of his own limitations and thus necessitating on his part a stiffening of the will and a reassertion of his determination to meet Grendel, whatever the obstacles may be. It is in such portions as these that the real significance of the poem is revealed. That night Beowulf and his band sleep in the Hall. The monster comes, kills one of the thanes, grapples next with Beowulf, and is finally forced to retreat, having left behind an arm, which Beowulf tore from his body, thereby inflicting a death wound. For this deed Beowulf receives unstinted praise and many gifts. The following night, however, Grendel's mother comes to avenge the death of her son. Hrothgar's men have resumed guard of the Hall. Aeschere, the King's most beloved warrior, is carried away by the fiend. Beowulf is apprised of this new peril in the morning, whereupon he assures the King that he will follow the monster to her lair. The minstrel seems to have been especially inspired when he wrote the episode that follows. Beowulf was now confronted with a new and complex danger. He was called upon to succeed in the face of obstacles the real nature of which he could not conjecture, and to meet a monster whose power he could but vaguely gauge and whose spells might completely baffle a human being. Besides, the dam inhabited a den at the bottom of a lonely pool. The water was extremely abhorrent. By night queer fires played about on its surface. Men had learned to loathe the place, shrouded as it was in stenchy vapor and poisonous mists. Beowulf is resolute in the face of all this—a true epic hero. The description of the fight that follows is the most stirring part of the poem. Beowulf is again victorious; and Hrothgar again lavishes many costly gifts upon his illustrious visitor after this second encounter.

Having subdued the evil monsters, Beowulf returns to his home, where he is warmly received by Hygelac, and from whom he receives what might be regarded as the equivalent of an English earldom. After Beowulf rules the Geäts for fifty years,

a Fire-Drake ravages the country, Beowulf's own house falling a prey to the monster. With the same courage that typified his former exploits he meets this new and more terrifying situation. At the moment of battle all his men forsake him but one, Wiglaf. After a fearful encounter the Fire-Drake is slain, but not until he has inflicted a mortal wound upon his slayer. Wiglaf is dispatched to bring the treasure to his dying lord; and there by the side of the gray sea Beowulf expires. What follows is thus related in the poem:

Then for him the Geäts made the pyre, firm on earth,
And hung it with helmets, with byrnies a-sheen,
And with battle-bucklers, as his prayer had been.
And they laid amid it the Prince of wondrous worth,
Laid their Lord beloved, weeping in their dearth.
And upon the hill-top the warriors awoke
The mightiest of bale-fires. Rose the wood-smoke,
Swart above the blazing. And the roar of flame
Blended was with wailing, as still the winds became,
Till, hot unto his heart, it broke the Geät's bone-frame.
Unglad of mood, in grief they mourned their great Chief dead.
And his Wife, with hair bound, her song of sorrow said,
Over and over: how 'twas hers to dread
Days of harm and hardship, warriors' fall and grame,
The terror of the raider, captivity and shame.

The sky the reek had swallowed. The Weders raised thereby
A mound upon the headland, that was broad and high,
Seen afar from ocean by sailors on their ways,
And built the battle-bold One a beacon in ten days.
Around the brands and ashes a wall they ran and wrought,
The worthiest contriving of men of wisest thought.
And in the barrow set they ring and gem and plate,
And all the splendor-booty out of hoard of late
Forth their hands had taken, urged by heads of hate.
They gave the wealth of jarlmen to earth for to hold,
Now where yet it liveth, in the mold, the gold,
As useless unto mortals as it was of old.

Then around the mound rode, with cry and call,
Bairns of the aethelings, twelve of all,
To mourn for their Master, their sorrow to sing,

Framing a word-chant, speaking of the King:
 They vaunted his earlship, they honored doughtily
 His wonder-works of glory. Let it ever be,
 That heart of man shall cherish and word of man shall praise
 The Master-Friend, when in the end his spirit goes its ways.
 So the Geätish clansmen bemoaned their dearth,
 The passing-forth of Beowulf, these comrades of his hearth,
 Calling him a World-King, the mildest under crown,
 And to his kin the kindest, and keenest for renown.

(from the translation by William Ellery Leonard)

A gray, misty atmosphere pervades the entire poem. The purpose of the poet seems to be that of suggesting a weird kind of terror at every turn. The gloom of the sea,

Who on the deep contested in swimming hard enow!—
 When in your pride ye twain did attempt the waters wide,
 And risked in rash vain-glory your lives upon the tide?
 Nor might not any man then, whether lief or loath,
 From fearful voyage dissuade ye, from breasting seaward both;

We did as we had vowed to! Our naked swords had we,
 Our hardy swords, in hands there, on breasting seaward both,
 To fend us from the whale-fish. He could no whit from me
 Float o'er the sea-flood swifter— and I from him was loath.
 Thus were we twain together five nights upon the wave,
 Till surge and weltering waters us both asunder drave;
 The coldest of all weathers, dark night and northern blast,
 Blew battle-grim against us; fierce were the floods we passed;

(translation by William Ellery Leonard)

the hazy fens and morasses, the murky moors and haunted waters, the grim wood,

All ahead he hastened with a few wise men
 For to view the region, till a sudden he
 Found the joyless forest, found the mountain tree,
 Leaning o'er the hoar cliff. Under the wood,
 Blood-stained and troubled, there the waters stood.
 Unto the friends of Scyldings, unto every Dane,
 It was a thing of sorrow, a burden of heart's pain,
 Aye, to many a clansman a grief it was and dread,

When, upon the sea-cliff, they met with Aescher's head!

The flood with blood was boiling, yes, with the hot gore;
The folk saw down upon it; the horn was singing o'er
Its battle-blast of onset. The band all sate;
They watched along the water the sea-worms great,
Monsters of the dragon-breed, trying there the sea,
And on the foreland ledges Nicors lying free
(Who're wont at early morning their grievous quest to take
Out upon the sail-road)— and wild-beast and snake.

(translation by William Ellery Leonard)

—all aid in lending to the epic a feeling of brooding melancholy and unrelieved sadness. Wyrd prevails. "Fate always goes where it will," said Beowulf, when he was reflecting upon the possible outcome of the battle with Grendel. Throughout the poem we are repeatedly reminded of the futility of life, likewise of glory and fame.

Beowulf is written in the metrical form characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The lines break in the middle, with two stresses in each half line:

Then fared he forth, did Grendel, to seek at dead of night
The high house, how the Ring-Danes, after their beer, were dight.
The aethelings he found there, aslumber after mirth;
Naught they knew of sorrow, naught of human dearth.
The Creature of damnation, the grim, the greedy One,
The fierce One in his fury, was ready there anon;
And, where they rested, reft he thirty,thane bythane,
And thence went faring homeward, of his plunder fain,
With his fill of slaughter, to seek his lairs again.

(translation by William Ellery Leonard)

The lines do not rhyme. While alliteration is noticeable even in English versions of *Beowulf*, it is best illustrated in such lines as the following, taken from the original:

leōf leōdcyning	louge prāge
folcum gefraege	-faeder ellor hwearf

The first words in the two halves of each line begin with the same sound, in the first line with *l* and in the second with *f*. If we read the lines of the poem in this four-accented manner,

observing the rest in the middle of the line, we shall catch something of its swing and music. The vocabulary, in addition to the rhythm, is that of poetry, not of prose. In the lines,

. They pushed the bark away,
 Away on its eager voyage. The well-braced floater flew,
 The foamy-necked, the bird-life, before the winds that blew,
 Over the waves of the waters— till, after the risen sun
 Of the next day, the curved prow her course so well had run
 That these faring-men the land saw, the cliffs aglow o'er the deep,
 Broad sea promontories, high hills steep.
 Ocean now was o'er-wandered, now was their voyaging o'er.

(translation by William Ellery Leonard)

the imaginative quality is noticeably present. Indeed, a large proportion of the words like *water's home*, *bosoming fire*, *battle-eager*, *ocean-weary*, *floater* (for ship), etc., are restricted to poetic diction.

The oral nature of the tales from which *Beowulf* was derived has, in part at least, determined the literary characteristics of the epic. Because of this fact the narrative style abounds in repetitions, side comments, uncorrelated action, and abrupt twists and turns. The fact that these tales were sung or chanted called for simplicity and rapidity in the presentation of the story, so that co-ordinate simple sentences, rather than subordinate ones are used. The warriors listening to the minstrel might also more easily catch the thought when clothed in simile,

On he moved in anger; from eyes of him did glare,
Unto fire likest, a light unfair.

and metaphor,

On each and every North-Dane seized a grisly fright,
 On each who from the wall there heard that 'well-a-way'—
 Heard this God-Forsaker chant his gruesome lay,
 His song of loss-in-battle, heard bewail his wound
 This Grendel, Hell's Bondsman.

(translation by William Ellery Leonard)

These figures recur often in *Beowulf*. It is interesting to note in this connection the use of such compounds as "gold-friend," "the glorious one," "distributor of treasure," "giver of rings,"

"guardian of the ring-hoard," or "the protector of earls" for the name of king; or "wave-goer," "foamy-necked floater," "sea-wood," or "new-tarred bark" for ship. Figurative terms like these are known as "kennings."

Considering the origin and the circumstances under which *Beowulf* was composed, we have only words of praise for the poet of *Beowulf*. The poem excels in pictorial power. The scenery is sketched briefly but impressively. Through its lines run the vigor and vitality of the Anglo-Saxon warrior. There is a martial, staccato forcefulness about the rhythm, as well as a dignified seriousness. Notice the homely and realistic details when Grendel enters the Hall and begins his attack:

He had no thought, this Goblin, that business to put off;
 He pounced upon a sleeping man, starting quick enough!
 Unthwartedly he slit him, bit his bone-box, drunk
 From his veins the blood of him, gulped him chunk by chunk,
 Till soon, then, he had there this un-living Geat
 Altogether eaten down, even to hands and feet.

(translation by William Ellery Leonard)

There is reflected throughout *Beowulf* the gloomy and tumultuous Scandinavian folk-spirit, the pounding wave, the haze of the distant marshes. Where humor enters, it is but a grim irony, never a laugh, hardly a smile. The impending perils were too nigh, the press of life too urgent. However, the Anglo-Saxon faced the future unafraid, but not without awe, and trusted in Fate for the rest. The boastful challenges that *Beowulf* utters are to be considered not as so much bragging or as originating in a bravadolike spirit. Rather are they used to steel the warrior for the fray. When accompanied by courage and achievement, they lose their vaunting nature. With all its sternness, the poem breathes a certain loftiness of sentiment and manly tenderness. Because of its subjective and personal qualities, there is often a temptation to regard *Beowulf* not as an epic but merely as a general narrative poem. In a sense the subject lacks the vastness and dignity of an epic poem. Considered, however, from the standpoint of its spirit, interests, and aspirations, it is a true epic.

Even though *Beowulf* were not rated high in literary quality, it would still be prized as a human document. Its pictures of

manners and customs are of great historical value. In this poem we get glimpses of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers as they lived after they had settled upon the island of Britain and had arrived at a reasonably stable community life. Without this epic we should know very little about the culture of this period. It is truly "the poem of a nation's childhood." We get a clear conception of the activities of the Anglo-Saxons in war and peace, of their pride in royal blood, and of their violent passions in moments of stress. They were confident that a man would at times be given sufficient power to overcome whatever force might oppose him.

The chieftain's Hall—such as Heorot in this poem—was, to the Anglo-Saxon, an important center in tribal life. Here the spirit of the entire group reached its focal point. Here the tribal opinion was molded. As the warrior listened to speeches and songs, he got glimpses of his finest self, and was led to entertain thoughts of self-control. What feats he here vowed to perform were almost sacredly regarded, and he was expected to execute them at the earliest moment. In the manners that are admired at the feast we find some beginning of considerateness and, what we now should call, *culture*. The poet praises Beowulf as the defender of the Hall. It is possible that the poet-monk paid this high tribute to the Hall because in such a place the first message of Christianity may have reached many of the Anglo-Saxon people. The Hall is therefore rightly acclaimed as the "home of poetry in Old English civilization."

LITERARY EPICS *

The composition of the folk epics, as we have already noted, was influenced by the fact that they were to be recited. While this resulted in a poem of greater spontaneity, it imposed restrictions as well. The literary epics are to be read. This change from hearing to seeing brought greater opportunities to the writer of literary epics. The eye on a printed page can apprehend greater subtleties of thought and perceive finer shades of meaning than is possible to the ear.

Peoples have always sought for an embodiment of their ideals and emotions in a single individual. History of all times and of

* Also called *Epics of Art*.

all ages clearly demonstrates how a period is summed up in and characterized by a person of towering personality and indomitable will. As long as this human characteristic persists, epics will continue to be written. They will, however, vary in keeping with the change in the civilization which they represent. With a broadening of the mind and the enriching of the spirit, the epic creation will inevitably assume such new characteristics as will reflect that growth. The folk epic has a simple and concrete subject, in keeping with the needs of the age; the literary epic is more intricate, the product of an age which is more complex and more deliberate in its expression.

The literary epic is, then, a much more sophisticated product than that which the folk evolve. It represents a more advanced state of civilization. It reflects a much more conscious artistic effort. The texture is much smoother, the versification more studied and precise, and the words more evenly and consistently selected. On the other hand, the heroic quality, while persisting, is less pronounced in the literary epic. The writer of the latter type, though conscious of the epic tradition as started by Homer and continued by Vergil, is nevertheless influenced by his own race and time. Every age presents possibilities for epic production. The epic consciousness is there; so that in our twentieth century a poet might write an epic even though the early Greek and Roman models were lost. Had we time to study the literary epics of Vergil, Lucan, Camoens, Tasso, Dante, and Milton, we should appreciate this individual independence and the variation of theme, temperament, and even treatment.

Although the folk epic and the literary epic are different in their outward form, when we consider the question of craftsmanship, the two kinds of epics are one and the same form of art. They are both deliberate. In fact the epic in all ages is primarily the same, ministering ever to a similar, though constantly developing and changing need. The function which the epic is called upon to perform is at heart unvarying. The differences which do arise are those which are peculiar to particular peoples and to certain periods of time.

The materials used in folk epics and in literary epics are much the same. The difference again is one of poetic temperament and circumstances of composition. The poet of *Beowulf* depicted a physical conflict, however much that conflict revealed Beowulf's

character or typified the warring elements of nature. The poet of *Paradise Lost* was concerned with a spiritual conflict between Passion and Reason. The action in *Beowulf* is restricted to a small area, and all within a man's lifetime; that of *Paradise Lost* includes heaven and earth, and in its gigantic sweep takes in all of time. These differences were predetermined by the respective ages. Both types of epics contain subjective elements. Both are the outgrowth of their own day; for the epic poet is consciously or unconsciously guided by the intelligence and the wants and needs of the people. If the literary epic is superior to the folk epic, it is because it was written for a superior civilization.

PARADISE LOST

John Milton first gave definite expression to his ambition of writing a poem on some lofty theme in 1628, in *At a Vacation Exercise*. As late as 1642 he was still debating whether to choose the subject from British history or from the Biblical narratives. He was likewise still uncertain whether to use the dramatic or epic form. After devoting a minimum of five years to the direct composition of *Paradise Lost*, he published it in 1667. The original manuscript is not preserved. At first there were ten books; but in a later edition Milton divided books seven and ten, making in all twelve books.

The Bible constitutes the chief source for the theme of *Paradise Lost*. The Fall of Man was taken from the second chapter of *Genesis*; the War in Heaven and the Fall of Satan from the twelfth chapter of *Revelation*; the allegory of Sin and Death in Book II from *James* 1:15, and the account of Creation in Book IV from *Genesis* I.

Broadly interpreted, there are two themes in *Paradise Lost*: the Fall of the Angels and the Fall of Man. Milton considers these in the following order: the state of the fallen angels, the condition of man before the Fall, the circumstances surrounding the Fall of the Angels, the explanation of the Creation of the world, and the Fall of Man and the history of the world to Christ's triumph over Satan. In the first part of the epic the reader's interest is centered in Satan's attempts to avenge himself upon God; in the latter part the account is concerned with Adam and Eve, their home life, their Fall, and final punishment.

The subject proper begins with Satan's rising from the burning lake. Calling his leaders and huge army of followers about him in Pandaemonium, a place

Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave,

he consults with them what were best for them to do, whether to risk another battle to win Heaven, or to search out another world and to alienate from God the creatures which, they had heard, He had placed there. The latter was decided upon:

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their power
And where their weakness: how attempted best,
By force or subtlety.

Satan, the self-appointed leader, sets out upon the search. Delayed for a time by the two guards of Hell's gates, he spreads his wings and sails out into the "hoary Deep" of space.

The scene changes to Heaven. God and His Son see Satan progressing toward the Earth. They foresee the fall of man, but are merciful. The Son of God offers Himself a ransom for Man, which the Father accepts, ordains his incarnation, and commands that He be exalted above all Names in Heaven and Earth.

Meanwhile Satan, having been directed by Uriel, the regent of the orb of the Sun, locates the earth, journeys on to Paradise, leaps over the bounds, and from a high position on the Tree of Life, examines the Garden of Eden. Satan's first view of Adam and Eve brings from him an exclamation of wonder and admiration. The description of Adam and Eve in their naked majesty and beauty and of their exalted domestic life is beautifully portrayed by Milton. A few lines will illustrate:

So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's imbraces met—
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountainside,

They sat them down; and, after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.

Raphael is sent to warn Adam and Eve of Satan's presence in the Garden. The Angel relates to Adam what he knows of Satan's state, of the war in Heaven, of the final triumph of the Son, and of the creation of the world. Despite God's and Raphael's earlier admonitions, Eve yields to the eloquence of Satan, eats the fruit of the Tree of Life, and induces Adam in turn to share her experience. The guardian angels having returned to Heaven, God sends his Son to judge the transgressors. Following Satan's victory, Sin and Death build a broad highway between Hell and earth so that their journey to and fro might be the easier.

After the fall of Adam and Eve, Michael is sent to reveal to Adam the events that will transpire in the future and, finally, to lead them out of the Garden:

In either hand the hastening Angel caught
Our lingering Parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain—then disappeared.
They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;

The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

All these stupendous scenes are fittingly co-ordinated by the poet's single purpose into one story that for the inclusiveness of its historic narrative, the implications of its religious and moral setting, and the sheer bewilderment of its imaginative sweep can be equaled by no other epic.

Considered from the standpoint of the author's purpose, the theme of the Fall of Man in Adam pervades the entire epic. Adam is the progenitor and representative of the race, the cause as well as the type of human sin. The consideration of sin brings up the question of redemption—whether or not sin is to be comprehensible in a world ruled by a merciful God. Milton's avowed purpose, therefore, is to assert Providence and to "justify" God's ways with men. What justification he finds for Adam and Eve he finds for the world; for this original pair are accomplishing the destiny, not of one family or nation, but of the entire human race. Hence it is that *Paradise Lost* rises to supreme epic proportions in its theme and purpose. Its epic qualities are also clearly apparent in its stupendous setting, comprising Heaven, Chaos, Hell, and the planetary universe.

The poem is an astonishing revelation of Milton's wide reading, and of his acquaintance with the scientific, theological, metaphysical, and political knowledge of not only his own day but of all previous time as well. Milton adheres to the fundamental doctrines of God's creation of man, his fall from grace, and his salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Satan as the tempter of Eve, the vicarious death and resurrection of Christ, and the final judgment of the world—all find a place in Milton's theology.

In no other literary epic is the author so inextricably linked with his characters. *Paradise Lost* reflects Milton's feelings, his knowledge, his indomitable personality. The characters are so many Miltons. Through the character of Satan, Milton gives expression to his desire for liberty. In the scene at the council of Pandemonium, it is Milton, the Latin Secretary, speaking. Through God and the Son he throws himself personally into the

fight against Satan and marshals his theological and philosophical knowledge to discomfit him. Through Adam he expresses his views on woman and her place in the world. Through Gabriel he reviews, in a grand panoramic stroke, the history of the world. Everywhere we are conscious of Milton pouring into his poem the experience of a lifetime. Echoes recur of the difficulties which he experienced with his first wife. There are frequent passages which reflect his own relationship to the government—that of Latin Secretary to Cromwell. The pang of blindness which came upon him at forty-four years of age, and the constant danger which surrounded him in the midst of political enemies after the downfall of Cromwell's government are made the central ideas in several lyrical portions. The reference to his own blindness, for example, in Book III is almost pathetic.

. Thus with the year
 Seasons return; but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
 So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
 Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.

At times it appears almost as if Milton, in working out his great poem, has as the *one* impelling purpose the desire to drive passion, pride, and sensuality out of his own soul. The struggle between Reason and Passion in Adam and Eve is one that he too is waging. Adam is no other than Milton. Essentially, Satan's real opponent is also Milton. God waits to judge the outcome. In the truest sense Milton and Satan are the chief characters, the protagonists in a spiritual battle, just as Grendel and Beowulf were the combatants in a physical contest. The colossal scene

then is enacted in the soul of the poet—in the soul of humanity; for Milton may be said to typify mankind.

Milton justifies God's ways to men then by justifying God's ways with himself personally. He insists upon the moral responsibility of the individual. The human will is free to act as it desires. Milton thus expresses it at one place:

God made thee perfect, not immutable;
And good he made thee; but to persevere
He left it in thy power—ordained thy will
By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity.
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitates.

Adam's freedom, it will be noted, is everywhere insisted upon. He therefore brings condemnation upon himself. As in the life of every human being, the essential fall of Adam occurs when Passion dethrones Reason. Thus Milton gathers into one mighty poem the learning of the ages, and by injecting his own personality, has developed one great imaginative, but human conception, even though the flights of his fancy into unknowable regions often leaves man an infinitesimal point on the brow of time and space.

Milton's genius as a poet is demonstrated, not only in his ability to cope with a subject of magnitude and profoundness, but in the verse technique which he employs. The iambic pentameter unrhymed line, called blank verse, is his chosen form, illustrated in the lines,

We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war.

To appreciate Milton's poetry, however, we must examine more specifically the particular type of blank verse which he uses; for it is very different from that which the poets of his own century used. In short, it is Milton's own. He created without regard for precedent. Let us read the following lines from Book I:

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; // his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, // massy, // large, // and round,

Behind him cast.//The broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the moon,//whose orb
 Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
 At evening, //from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno, //to descry new lands,
 Rivers, //or mountains, //in her spotty globe.
 His spear—//to equal which the tallest pine
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, //to be the mast
 Of some great Admiral, //were but a wand—
 He walked with, //to support uneasy steps
 Over the burning marle, //not like those steps
 On Heaven's azure; //and the torrid clime
 Smote on him sore besides, //vaulted with fire.

One of the first things we notice is that the lines are not even or regular in accent, that is the iambic meter is not followed throughout. In each of lines one and two, for example, an anapest appears in the last foot. Not only do the feet vary, but sometimes the lines. Infrequently Milton also uses lines of three, four, and six feet in length. In

For that celestial light? Be it so, since He,

there are six stressed syllables. Nor does the poet hesitate, as in

And high disdain from sense of injured merit,

to end a line with an unaccented syllable.

Going back to the foregoing sixteen lines, we notice that Milton's blank verse does not divide itself into two balancing halves, as is normally the case in blank verse, but varies the breaks considerably. If you let your eye wander down over the lines, you will notice that the breaks (indicated by //) appear in almost any part of the line. In two of the lines no divisions occur at all. Notice the retarding effect of the three pauses in line three. In addition to these line divisions, notice that the sense is carried on from line to line. In nine out of the sixteen lines no end punctuation marks are used. Only two lines end with periods. This continuity of rhythm is one of the poet's metrical characteristics. These foregoing features make for variation, monotony therefore being always far removed. And yet the iambic pen-

tameter music is present, giving to every line a basically similar sound and effect.

The quoted lines illustrate several others of Milton's metrical features. He is fond of appositives, such as in line three, where all the words are descriptive of his shield. Equally given is the poet to the use of parenthetical remarks, for instance in line ten, *to equal . . . a wand*. Milton often uses what is called *expanded similes*. An instance of this figure of speech occurs in line four, beginning with the words, *The broad* and extending to the end of the ninth line.

Were we to inquire still more carefully into the special technique of Milton's style as found in *Paradise Lost*, we should mention his frequent inversions:

Him, after all disputes,
Forced I absolve,

his use of one part of speech for another:

the great *consult* began (verb for a noun)
the palpable *obscure* (adjective for a noun),

his omission of words not necessary to the sense:

Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived.
Thy presence—agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice . . .

and his grouping of foreign or strange proper nouns:

The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
Next *Chemos*, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroar to Nebo and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Elealé to the Asphaltick Pool:

Milton really has two styles of poetry. The one is figurative and colorful, reflecting his sensuous passion and imagination, as in the following lines from Book IV:

The roof

Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
 Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
 Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
 Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
 Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
 Iris all hues, roses, and gessamin,
 Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic; under foot the violet,
 Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
 Broidered the ground, more coloured than with stone
 Of costliest emblem.

The other style is more direct and more tightly packed. With it Milton presents his views on ethical and theological subjects. Part of Satan's final plaint in Book IX will illustrate this:

O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
 With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
 Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime,
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
 That to the highth of deity aspired!
 But what will not ambition and revenge
 Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
 As high he soared, obnoxious, first or last,
 To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
 Bitter ere long back on itself recoils.

The second style is more intellectual and more fervid than the first. It should, of course, be remembered that the two styles, more often than not, appear jointly, the one intermingling with and supporting the other.

When we consider the rhythm, the vocabulary, the sentence structure, and the imagery in *Paradise Lost*, we are led to conclude that all of them combine to give us the literary and intellectual, the elaborate and learned, the restrained yet personal style which is suitably called Milton's "organ tone."

PARADISE REGAINED

Paradise Regained appeared in 1671. For its immediate inception Thomas Ellwood, a young acquaintance of the poet, was

partly responsible. Upon returning the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* to Milton in 1665, Mr. Ellwood asked, "Thou hast said much of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise found*?" *Paradise Regained* is the logical counterpart of *Paradise Lost*. In the latter, Adam, representing humanity, failed; in the former, Christ as the representative of humanity, succeeded. *Paradise Regained* therefore has to do with man's regeneration.

The poem adheres closely to the account of the temptation as given in *Luke* 4:1-13. After Christ's fast of forty days in the wilderness, Satan tempts Christ first by asking Him to turn stones into bread. A luscious banquet is next set before Him, with all the appeal that such a sight would have for one who hungers. Satan offers Him, by turn, riches, power, glory, David's throne, the kingdoms of the world, and finally wisdom; but in none of these wiles is he successful. In desperation he seeks to frighten Christ by sending a fierce storm upon the region of the wilderness. Before taking his leave of Christ he sets Him upon the highest pinnacle and sneeringly asks Him to cast himself down. Thereupon angels come and minister unto Him.

The structure is perceptibly patterned after that of the *Book of Job*, which Milton regarded as a model of the brief epic. Like the *Book of Job*, the framework of *Paradise Regained* is in the form of a dialogue, with narrative introduction, interludes, and conclusion. The poem has, accordingly, often been thought of as a kind of dramatic epic. The epical qualities, while not so pronounced as in those of its predecessor, *Paradise Lost*, are perceptible in the theme and setting. *Paradise Regained* is a concern of the entire human race, not of an individual; and the supernatural machinery is still present.

Paradise Regained, like *Paradise Lost*, depicts a contest between Reason and Passion. The conflict again is a spiritual one, the scene being in the minds and hearts of the protagonists. Reason lost in *Paradise Lost*; in *Paradise Regained* it won. Christ's victory is one of temperance, the subordination of desire to reason. The poem, like its predecessor, is filled with autobiographic material, likewise with the fruits of the poet's learning. Though it lacks the creative impulse and the imaginative glow of *Paradise Lost*, it nevertheless remains a truly great work of art.

DRAKE

Alfred Noyes' *Drake* was published in 1908. From the point of view of 1900, it sums up the civilization of Elizabethan England. It sings the glory of Sir Francis Drake:

He made this little isle, against the world,
Queen of the earth and sea. Nor this alone
The theme; for, in a mightier strife engaged
Even than he knew, he fought for the new faiths,
Championing our manhood as it rose
And cast its feudal chains before the seat
Of kings;—nay, in a mightier battle yet
He fought for the soul's freedom, fought the fight
Which, though it still rings in our wondering ears,
Was won then and for ever—that great war,
That last Crusade of Christ against His priests,
Wherein Rome fell behind a thundering roar
Of ocean triumph over burning ships
And shattered fleets, while England, England rose,
Her white cliffs laughing out across the waves,
Victorious over all her enemies.

It contains, like *Paradise Lost*, twelve books. The story is characterized by rapid, thrilling narrative. Though it contains little of the supernatural elements of the older English epics, it is an epic in the main essentials. Drake, not unlike Beowulf, is a typical national hero, working out, with the aid of divine Providence, the destiny of his race.

QUESTIONS

1. From your reading of *Beowulf*, reproduce as vividly as you can a typical Anglo-Saxon banquet scene.
2. Describe two burial rites which are depicted in *Beowulf*. How do you account for their ceremonial differences?
3. Write a full character sketch of the typical Anglo-Saxon warrior as he is depicted in *Beowulf*.
4. Differentiate between those portions of *Beowulf* which echo an heroic period and those which mirror a later and more civilized period.

5. As set forth in *Beowulf*, what was the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward war? Describe their method of fighting.
6. What virtues and traits of character, as shown in *Beowulf*, did the Anglo-Saxon admire?
7. As gleaned from *Beowulf*, what was the position of woman in the Anglo-Saxon days?
8. What qualities that are part of the Anglo-Saxon people do the Englishmen of today still possess?
9. Why do you suppose neither Grendel's nor his mother's appearance is described in detail?
10. What type of monarchy is reflected in *Beowulf*? Characterize fully.
11. Assemble a number of quotations from *Beowulf* which bear evidence of Christian influence. Likewise list a number of quotations which represent pagan influence.
12. Give a full description of Satan, gleaned your material from Books I and II of *Paradise Lost*.
13. Why is the scene in Book I of *Paradise Lost* epical?
14. In Book II of *Paradise Lost*, what gives an epical cast to the guardians of Hell's gates?
15. What part of Satan's activities in Book II of *Paradise Lost* is especially epic in nature?
16. How was Pandaemonium constructed? Describe its appearance. Consult Book I.
17. What arguments did Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub present at the Council in Book II of *Paradise Lost*?
18. What similarities and dissimilarities do you notice in *Beowulf* and in Satan?
19. Take any ten lines from the first two books of *Paradise Lost* and examine their meter. Do you note any irregularities? If so, what are they?
20. Would the character "Buffalo Bill" lend itself to epical treatment in some later period?

For those who desire questions of a more extensive nature, the following are suggested:

1. In what respects may the following old English Christian poems be regarded as epic fragments?

Christ

Elene

Andreas

Dream of the Rood

Juliana

Judith

Widsith

2. Contrast *Beowulf* and the German epic *Nibelungenlied*.
3. What claims do each of the following poems of Caedmon have to epic classification?
Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, and Christ and Satan
4. In what respects is *The Gest of Robin Hood* a folk epic?
5. Make a study of the Irish poem *Deirdre* as an epic poem.
6. What traits of character do Sir Francis Drake in Noyes' *Drake* and Beowulf in *Beowulf* have in common?
7. What do Abraham Cowley's epic *Davideis* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* have in common?
8. What epic elements are discernible in each of the following?
 Edmund Spenser: *The Faerie Queene*
 Alfred Tennyson: *The Idylls of the King*
 William Morris: *The Life and Death of Jason*
9. The term "epic-drama" is often applied to Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts*. Is this an appropriate designation?
10. What epic qualities can you perceive in the following?
 John Keats: *Hyperion*
 William Morris: *Sigurd the Volsung*
The Lovers of Gudrun
11. Longfellow's *Evangeline* and John Trumbull's *M' Fingal* are said to possess certain epic characteristics. What are these?
12. Longfellow's *Hiawatha* is often regarded as the epic of the American Indian. Investigate the correctness or incorrectness of this contention.
13. Might John Neihardt's *The Song of Three Friends* and *The Song of Hugh Glass* be regarded as epic material, from which a later epic might be derived?
14. Contrast Book I of Milton's *Paradise Lost* with Stephen Vincent Benét's Book I of *John Brown's Body*. Give particular attention to verse structure, action, and characters in each.
15. Does the recent epic by W. B. D. Henderson, *The New Argonautica*, fulfill the epic requirements?

EXAMPLES

English Epics:

Anonymous: Beowulf

John Milton: Paradise Lost

Paradise Regained

Alfred Noyes: Drake

American Epics:

Stephen Vincent Benét: John Brown's Body

W. B. Drayton Henderson: The New Argonautica

CHAPTER VI

ROMANCE

A METRICAL romance is a fictitious story of chivalric adventure. It opens the door to a world of magicians, dragons, chapels, castles, enchanted forests, fair ladies, and impassioned love. Brave knights ride through dangerous haunts and undergo unheard-of privations in order to rescue beautiful maidens from oppressive monsters and tyrants. The metrical romance appeals to the sense of the heroic, the marvelous, or the supernatural. Romantic love, chivalry, and religion predominate. There is no hesitancy on the part of the author to present incidents that are improbable and highly fantastic. He is writing for an audience that delights in the unusual and the imaginative.

HISTORY

Old as is the romantic idea, the metrical romance as a type of literature first made its appearance, as far as we know, during the Middle Ages (500-1400) "when knighthood was in flower." It is inseparably linked with the feudal society of Medieval Europe. Associated also with the development of this form of poetry are the wars of the Holy Sepulcher—the Crusades.

Certain elements in the political and social life of the Middle Ages were particularly favorable to the rise of the metrical romance. The Roman Empire and the Christian Church dominated the thought of the period. Invariably the term Scholasticism is associated with the Middle Ages, whereby we are reminded that only authorized teachers, or the clergy, were permitted to teach authorized doctrines. These were none other than those which had been accepted for centuries and handed down by the Christian Church. In such a state of affairs new ideas were regarded with disfavor. What the past had bequeathed in sentiment and doctrines was treasured and discussed with reverence. The so-called Schoolmen of this early period, desirous of realizing a

Holy Roman Empire, regarded the Pope as the ecclesiastical head of Christendom, and the Emperor as a secular ruler under him. Out of this conception sprang the idea of a feudal government and, in turn, a system of chivalry. The fervent religious atmosphere, in which chivalry was grounded, is to be accounted for in this way. The romance came into being to interpret, in a literary way, this chivalry, which throughout embodied the ideals of the nobility and therefore imparted to the romance the aristocratic note which is characteristically associated with it.

During the Middle Ages different kinds of poetic narrative were developed. The various social classes were intensely interested in story-telling; and each developed the form best adapted to its needs and instincts. So it happens that the knight is linked with romance, the priest with Bible stories, and the peasant with *fabliaux* or ballads.

Leaving the consideration of Europe in general and directing our attention to England, specifically, we find that the beginning of the English verse romance is associated with the coming of the Normans in 1066. William and his barons brought with them the medieval traditions of the continent. These traditions determined very largely the trend of political and literary life of England for more than three centuries—until the beginning of the Tudor regime in 1485. For this reason Feudalism and chivalry furnished the main themes for English literature during the Anglo-Norman period.

The Norman noblemen from the first craved excitement. Such courtly narratives as would embody marvelous deeds of heroism were naturally in demand. The romance was therefore destined to develop along such lines as the desires of the baronial party might direct. Chivalric episodes were recited in great halls on long winter evenings before a group of feudal lords and ladies. This audience was eager to listen to the most impossible narratives of dwarfs and giants, of enchanted deserts and magic spells, of feats of arms and thrilling rescues. The humdrum nature of their social life made them patient listeners. This great demand for stories created a minstrelsy whose sole duty it was to furnish entertainment.

As the Normans continued their life in England, however, they became more and more detached from things continental; and the romances, in turn, gradually assumed a distinctively

Anglo-Norman flavor. With the retention of the foreign stories and the development of the native supply, there grew up in time a remarkably large range of stories, which the professional minstrel, true to his medieval instinct for codification, eventually arranged into numerous groups, or *cycles*, which constitute the greatest body of writing produced in England before Chaucer. A cycle of verse romance pertains to a collection of romances which narrate the adventures of a single hero or knight or a group of closely related knights.

Some of these early metrical romances centered about the *heroes of classical antiquity*. The heroic figures of Greece and Rome were metamorphosed into knights by men who believed themselves to be descendants of Brutus. Englishmen generally of the Middle Ages believed themselves to have descended from the Trojans. We find in such romances as *King Alisaunder* and *Geste Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy* a presentation of the heroic element in humanity and the glories of invincible knight-hood. These romances laud the masculine elements of chivalry, the love of encounter, and triumph against odds. The fighting hero is exalted, as in *Richard Coeur de Lion*. Contrary to the general tendency in metrical romances, some of these pieces are strongly patriotic.

Other medieval romances recount stories of *oriental origin*, as in *Floris and Blanchefleur* and *The Seven Sages of Rome*. There is a tendency in these to depict the dangers which beset youth: the ensnaring artifice of woman and the malice and deceitfulness of man.

Many verse romances are concerned with *Charlemagne and his mighty paladins*, as in *Sir Otuel*, *Sir Ferumbras*, and *Roland and Vernagu*. The English regarded Charlemagne as the first great Christian king, and were, accordingly, eager to perpetuate his memory. In these romances of Old French origin, the crusades furnished the mainspring of action, the Saracen being as distasteful to the English as to the French.

Those medieval English romances which are *native* to English soil are animated by the same spirit that induced their Viking forefathers to cross the Channel. In *Havelok* and *King Horn* may be observed much of the same ruggedness that characterizes *Beowulf*.

By far the most captivating of the old romances are those of

Celtic origin. Love appears as a mighty force, at once passionate and tragic, as in *Sir Tristram*. Some of the Celtic stories introduce the fairy as having a part in the affairs of man. The reader's imagination is charmed by the fanciful scenes as they appear one after another, shading into a twilight of Welsh landscape where spirits, fays, and weird enchantments hold uncanny sway. In such poems as *Sir Launfal*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Emare*, and *Sir Degare* we see at its best the mingling of mortal and fairy.

Other Celtic narratives are concerned with the ideals of chivalry, as instanced in the matchless character of Sir Gawain. In him loyalty, honor, and courtesy are found in ideal union. In the older romances he possesses every good quality that characterizes true knighthood. In the romances of this class, action proceeds on a higher level. Some pity is shown for the vanquished. The fight is conducted on a fairer basis. Passions are held more in subjection, and kindness and magnanimity praised. In such narratives as *Golagros and Gawain*, *Ywain and Gawain*, *The Wedding of Sir Gawain*, and *Avowing of King Arthur*, the old English romance reaches its highest idealism; and in such metrical studies as *Ipomedon*, *Sir Cleges*, *Amis and Amiloun*, and *Sir Isumbras*, the knightly character is most perfectly portrayed.

The most important of the medieval English cycles of romances we have not yet mentioned, namely that of *King Arthur and his Round Table*. After several centuries of rule in England, the Normans sought to evolve a cycle of romances which would be truly English. The result of this desire was King Arthur, the counterpart of the French hero, Charlemagne.

The greater number of the legends concerning Arthur, Merlin, Tristram, and the Holy Grail originated in Wales. Brought over into England, cycles gradually developed around Sir Tristram, Sir Gawain, Sir Lancelot, the Holy Grail, Merlin, and the Death of Arthur. These eventually were associated with the story of the historical King Arthur; and together they formed one notable collection, centering about King Arthur and the Round Table. Through the efforts of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, and Layamon, Arthur was raised to such eminence as to become the ideal British hero.

The English metrical romances which we have thus far considered were more or less distinctly of the heroic type. Before they had developed very far along this line, they came under

the influence of France. During the twelfth century French literature dominated the literary tastes of Christendom. The French romantic school, under the leadership of Benoît de Ste. More and especially of Chrétien de Troyes, not only sent out tales about their own illustrious Charlemagne and Roland, but imported stories from the best known peoples of Europe and Asia. In the hands of the French the English stories took on a new spirit and form. French politeness and refined sentiment, together with the influence of the church, transformed the unpolished heroic narratives into stories of pure romance. For instance, the gloom and the monotony, the sharply drawn pictures of love and hate, of struggle and death, so characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon stories, were changed into romances of refined feeling and chivalric idealism. Many of these transformed stories found their way back to England, especially those which appealed to the Anglo-Norman temperament, such as those which depicted the slaughter of Saracens, the fights between knights and dragons, the defeat of wicked knights, and magicians who held in bondage innocent princesses. English romances, then, with several exceptions, are derived from French romances. Many of these importations underwent change at the hands of the English popular writer in order to adapt them to the English taste; but on the island of Britain romances in French and in English continued side by side.

The English metrical romance, as for example that instanced in the Arthurian romance as we now know it, is therefore the result of a fusion of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and French elements. This composite romance has something of the extravagance, enchantment, and mellowness of the Celtic race; the somberness, the vigor, the heroic adventure of the Anglo-Saxon; and the politeness, chivalry, and conventionality of the French. The Arthurian romance has no equal in the romantic verse literature of the world. There is nothing quite like it. It stands as an enduring monument to the three peoples that produced it. More particularly is it the glory of the English race whose national life is written into its lines.

Taken as a class, the best medieval metrical romances were written in England during the fourteenth century, in what is commonly called the Age of Chaucer. Generally speaking, the

English were unable to imitate the French style, or to approximate their deftness for fine and polite shades. There was in the English blood a different combination of elements. Despite this general artistic inferiority, several English poems have attained to a high point of excellency.

Le Morte Arthur dates from the end of the fourteenth century. It consists of 3970 iambic tetrameter lines with alternate rhymes. The poem is divided into eight-line balladlike stanzas. Here is one of the stanzas:

A turnement the king lett bede,
At Wynchester shuld it be,
Yonge Galehad was a good in nede,
The Chefteyne of the Crye was he,
With knights that were stiff on stede,
That ladyes and maydens might se
Who that beste were of dede
Thrughe doughtynesse to have the gre.

The poet tells the story of the love of Lancelot and Guinevere, the wars that follow, the death of Arthur after the battle with Modred in the West, and the deaths of Lancelot and Guinevere.

The poem is remarkably well constructed, the progress in the love of Lancelot and Guinevere giving time sequence and unity to the whole. Some of the more outstanding weaknesses of the medieval metrical romance, such as long digressions and circumlocutions, are noticeably reduced in number. What make the poem particularly attractive to us today are the lifelike characters, the directness and vigor of the narrative, and the simplicity of the human emotions. The frequent crudity is more than counterbalanced by the delightful brevity and the invigorating action. The scene on the coast of Cornwall before King Arthur's death is a piece of description of which any poet might be proud.

The alliterative *Mort Arthure* of 4346 long unrhyming lines is a contemporary poem of *Le Morte Arthur*. The story of *Mort Arthure* is less interesting to us than is that of the other. It recounts wars and adventures with giants and knights that are vague and unknown. The numerous exploits are rather disjointed, partly because of the lack of a central unifying theme. In a general way, the life of Arthur is followed from the time he wars against Lucius to his last fight with Modred. As in many other

Arthurian romances, the chief interest centers about the final battle between Modred and the king.

What redeems the poem is its vigor and originality. The poet impresses us with his simple, sturdy nature. Unlike the author of *Le Morte Arthur*, he is typically Anglo-Saxon—a true Englishman. His characters are drawn in accordance with his national ideals. Flashes of humor and a keen love of nature are added charms for the modern reader.

By far the most artistic of the fourteenth century metrical romances is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which we shall consider at some length under a later and separate heading. The metrical romance was destined to undergo some changes in the course of the fourteenth century. The man most responsible for this was Geoffrey Chaucer. In his metrical romances, *The Squire's Tale* and *The Knight's Tale* (although he called them *tales*, they are *romances*), Chaucer brought the age of chivalry much closer to our vision. His keen insight into human nature and his wholesome sense of humor did not permit him to sanction the whole of the romantic machinery. In *Sir Thopas* he shrewdly parodies the worst of the medieval romances. Even in *The Knight's Tale*, the best of his metrical romances, he evinces here and there a slight repugnance for the extravagances of chivalric love.

The Knight's Tale is an excellently told story. Chaucer doubtless smiled as he portrayed the rival lovers, Arcitë and Palamon, persisting almost insanely in their love for Emelye. The poet's sense of humor must also have dictated the episode of the "infernal furie" which was sent from Pluto to scare Arcitë's horse. The wrenching of the narrative at this point to make possible a happy Palamon-Emelye love-scene ending is one of the delightful episodes in this romance. But Chaucer's delight for story-telling prevailed; and he gave us in *The Knight's Tale* a true metrical romance which the modern reader enjoys. The chivalric atmosphere prevails throughout. Though the supernatural machinery is used, it occupies a subordinate place. The probable is more in evidence; and human beings, as we know them, are replacing the highly idealistic and feudalistic persons of chivalric unreality.

The popularity and progress of the metrical romance continued during the fifteenth century. About 1450 *The Squire of Low Degree* was written. It is a story of a king's squire who fell

passionately in love with the king's daughter. She returned his love and agreed to become his wife on condition that he would, after a period of seven years, prove himself a valiant knight. Though crossed in their love by a jealous steward, these lovers are eventually united in happy matrimony. The poet tells his story with great economy and freshness. One incident follows another with readable rapidity. In the story is presented a lively portrait of medieval life—in the long lists of birds, trees, vines, armor, etc. This poem contains many evidences of a changing literary taste.

The battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 ended not only feudal wars but the age of chivalry. A new social epoch was beginning. Humanism, with its belief in the dignity and worth of the individual, was fast dispelling the medieval shades. The dearth of labor together with a subsequent growing in power of the common people also aided in breaking down the old social order. The economic conditions for the laborer were improving, and with this, the interest in the aristocratic chivalric literature was dying out.

In the main, therefore, the romance fell into disfavor during the sixteenth century. The Renaissance with its amazing discoveries, its social revolutions, its industrial and geographical expansion, its revolt from Rome, its nationalism, and its reasonableness was not in sympathy with the extravagances of the chivalric stories. To the reformer, the love element was well-nigh frivolous. He was quick to attack the licentiousness of these latter medieval romances, precipitating the fall with which they were sooner or later destined to meet. In view of this changing demand, it is especially strange that Edmund Spenser should have attempted to write a poem, which in its outward appearance and machinery was a metrical romance. We shall defer a discussion of his *Faerie Queene* (1596) until later.

After the appearance of *The Faerie Queene*, interest in the metrical romance did not revive until the beginning of the Romantic era, in the last decade of the eighteenth century. An intense emotion, joined with a fervent display of imagery, typified the Romantic age. In the attempt of these poets to combine the elements of sensibility and imagination, they revived much of the medieval English poetry. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel* (1800) is a good example of a poem which employs a refined

medieval setting to obtain an effect of mysticism and unearthliness. This fragmentary poem clearly illustrates the revival of medieval enchantment. This is a romance only in so far as it is tintured by the knightly atmosphere and the weird supernaturalism of the older romances. In its lyrical power, greater psychological impact, and indefiniteness of narrative account it would claim no such classification.

The keen interest in mystery and adventure, together with a sympathetic delight in the medieval romances of Chivalry, induced Sir Walter Scott to write romances which reflect the medieval times of his own country. Though separated by centuries, historically, from the medieval age, Scott found in the local life of his time conditions of society that had much in common with the atmosphere of the older romances. As he went along the Border, gathering legends and ballads, he found in isolated sections a people still steeped in feudalistic traditions. Scott's antiquarian turn of mind and his keen delight in pageantry and in a good fight, led him to revive the old scenes with great enthusiasm. He found in the history of the past a host of material for his purpose. There were instances of individual heroism and of bloody clan fights; episodes of superstition and dark auguries; there were beautiful lassies and true warrior lovers. Here was a mine of romantic material. Scott so treated these traditional times in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, *Rokeby* and *The Lady of the Lake* that they take on an agreeable modern aspect. He so handles these feudalistic and medieval customs as to link them up with Scottish soil. They become an integral part of the national past, and accordingly take on an interest not heretofore associated with the romance. In a word, Scott employed the principles of medieval romance in the service of Scottish legend.

Scott's own nature fitted him peculiarly for the writing of metrical romances. He was a man of action. He loved adventure. The feudal force of character, the chivalric ideals, the aristocratic tone, and the medieval picturesqueness—all appealed to him. Of his own pedigree he was very proud; with much satisfaction did he refer to his descent from the House of Buccleuch. Add to his martial nature a lively imagination, a high spirit, restless energy, and antiquarian turn of mind, and you have a union of qualifications well adapted to romantic compositions.

POETRY AND ITS FORMS

Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood:
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock or castle-roof
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

The encounter between Lord Cranstoun and Sir William of Deloraine has nothing of the fictitious about it. What could be more probable than the description of the battle of Flodden Field? It is Scott's descriptions and his lively meters that account for the perennial interest in his romances.

When the interest in the metrical romances of the Scottish border began to wane, the romance was revived by Byron's melodramatic verse stories of Oriental crime. The interest in

foreign scenery and life was instrumental in making Byron's romances popular. The somewhat decorous emotion of Scott's stories gave way to the wild and voluptuous passion in Byron's narratives. The national and patriotic flavor of *Marmion* gave way to the personal hero and his adventures in *The Bride of Abydos*. The localization of *The Lady of the Lake* changes to the vague and distant Oriental lands. Blood flows more profusely, and pain is depicted more glaringly in Byron's poems.

All of Byron's romances are motivated by a morbid introspection. A sneer plays on the poet's face. The weird midnight meeting of Zuleck and Selim in *The Bride of Abydos* is both terrifying and romantic. Selim speaks wildly, passionately; the impending catastrophe is in the speaker's voice and actions. We are not surprised to be hurled into a final scene of revenge and bloodshed, love finding no satiety and continued life no hope. The same atmosphere pervades *The Siege of Corinth*. The renegade Alp has stormed Corinth to the point of surrender. While walking close to the walls of the besieged city on the night before its fall, he unexpectedly meets his Francesca, who offers him her love if he will

dash that turban to earth, and sign The Sign of the Cross.

Alp is relentless. The city falls on the following day; and there ensues a blood-chilling scene of the dying and the dead. The superhuman Minotti holds the infidels at bay, slowly retreating to the church, where, in his last moments of life, he tells Alp of Francesca's death. Alp is killed by a bullet from one of the few remaining defenders. Minotti sets fire to a magazine of powder; and church, Christians, and infidels are hurled to destruction.

The Victorian poets, as a group, were even more interested in the old romances than their romantic predecessors. While Scott, Byron, Keats, and Moore turned to Border and to oriental subjects, Tennyson, Arnold, Morris, and others revived the Arthurian legends. Their interest centered not in chivalric episodes as such, but in the opportunity that they afforded for a study of passions and intense moral conflicts. Among the best romances of this age are those based upon the unhappy loves of Tristram and Iselt, and Lancelot and Guinevere.

Tennyson was interested in the Arthurian stories all his life.

The Lady of Shalott was his first venture into the realm of Arthurian romance. In it he treats lyrically and mystically the Lancelot-Elaine story. In *The Princess* there is a free commingling of medieval and modern elements. It is both serious and comic, interesting as a story even though it is didactic in its theme. Tennyson considers in poetical form the position of woman in the world. In so doing, interesting aspects of love are portrayed. Whatever Tennyson's thesis, the poem today is read as a romance rather than as a repository of the poet's attitude on women's colleges.

Tennyson's most ambitious undertaking was that of *The Idylls of the King*. These epical-romantic Idylls set forth a history of Arthur's life in twelve stories, beginning with *The Coming of Arthur* and ending with *The Passing of Arthur*. Though Tennyson departs from the life and ideals of the medieval romance, as seen in his source book, Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, he presents a series of stories great in their poetic achievement and unrivaled in their variety and imaginative beauty. His flexibility and the excellence of his blank verse are everywhere apparent.

The Round Table in *The Idylls of the King* typifies ideal society; and the "Idylls" represent various sins that go to break up the Round Table. Guinevere and Lancelot are chiefly blamable for the downfall of Arthur's kingdom. In another sense, King Arthur represents the soul of man. As the king came out of an unknown eternity, lived his life, and went again to an unknown eternity, so the soul of man emanates from the great unknown, fights the battles of life, and passes on its way into the land of the Hereafter. Tennyson's general allegorical idea was that of the war of Sense on Soul. While we find almost true allegory in *The Faerie Queene*, in *The Idylls of the King* we have a combination of true history, legend, and pure invention. Both romances have, however, an underlying moral purpose.

In the annals of British romance there is no story more absorbing than that of Tristram and Iseult. Poets, artists, and musicians find in these lovers an inspiration to their best efforts. Notably Arnold and Swinburne of the nineteenth century and Robinson of the twentieth century have been attracted by the mutual devotion of Tristram and Iseult, and by the undying and uncontrollable passion that accompanied their love. The first of these,

Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult*, will receive our consideration on a later page.

In *Tristram of Lyonesse* Swinburne covers practically the entire legendary history of Tristram and Iseult, from the bringing of Iseult to Cornwall in *The Sailing of the Swallow* to the death union of the two lovers in *The Sailing of the Swan*. Upwards of 4000 lines are given to the story—one of numerous evidences of the perennial interest in this romance.

The latest poem to be written on this theme comes from the American poet, Edwin A. Robinson. In *Tristram*, as in Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult* and Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse*, the love element of the metrical romance is stressed, almost to the exclusion of the chivalric. Lancelot, Guinevere, Gawaine, Modred, and Camelot are faintly visible. Chivalry furnishes only a dim background as drama in opera. There is a clash of emotions rather than of arms; and the battleground is in the hearts of King Howel, King Mark, Queen Morgan, Iseult of Brittany, Iseult of Ireland, and Tristram. The Arthurian legend enters like faint music, heard at a distance.

Instead of knightly combat and supernatural episodes, we find in Robinson's *Tristram* character delineation. Some of the scenes are intensely passionate. The meeting of Tristram and Iseult of Ireland, before the latter's marriage to King Mark, throbs with bitter anguish. Breathless, too, is the scene between King Mark and Tristram after the detection of the latter's affectionate meeting with Iseult. The final death scene is powerfully portrayed. What could be more fitting and inevitable than that two whose souls were madly one should thus together take their leave of this fitful world?

Apart from the Tristram and Iseult legend, other stories of the Arthurian cycle have served as sources for a number of poets since Tennyson's day. William Morris was interested in medieval art and life from the first. His tapestry work on Arthurian subjects doubtless led him to write a number of Arthurian romances. *The Defense of Guenevere* is a kind of dramatic monologue rendering of Guenevere's trial. In *Sir Galahad*, *A Christmas Mystery*, and *The Chapel in Lyonesse*, Morris' medievalism is very apparent. The best of Morris' romances is that of *The Haystack in the Floods*. The parting of Robert and Jehane at the haystack in the floods is dramatically told:

he tried once more
 To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore
 And vain desire so tortured them,
 The poor grey lips, and now the hem
 Of his sleeve brush'd them.

 With a start
 Up Godman rose, thrust them apart;

 with empty hands
 Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw
 The long bright blade without a flaw
 Glide out from Godman's sheath, his hand
 In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
 Back Robert's head; she saw him send
 The thin steel down;

 This was the parting that they had
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

Edwin A. Robinson's *Merlin* and *Lancelot* are, like his *Tristram*, delineations of human passions, and, like *Tristram*, are remarkable for their depictions of the will and emotion in conflict.

Quite unlike Robinson's metrical romances are those of Masefield's in *Midsummer Night*. Masefield uses a variety of verse and stanzaic forms. The medieval spirit is absent; instead, the Arthurian legends are traced in a modern satiric vein. Contrast the description of chivalric combat in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or Tennyson's *Gareth and Lynette* with the following, taken from Masefield's *The Fight on the Beach, or, The Passing*:

Then for an instant Arthur fought with fire.
 He slipped from Modred's blow and swept at Gor
 A slash athwart the neck that made them four;
 Bein stabbed him at the sword-belt as he smote.
 Arthur saw Odwin drive
 Towards him, with his mallet swung aloft;
 Short'ning his point, he took him in the throat;
 Odwin's mace toppled from his grip, he coughed
 And fell upon the sand no more alive.

Satire is everywhere apparent, especially so in *The Taking of*

Guenivere and *The Old Tale of Begetting. The Birth of Arthur*, however, is a fascinating piece, with its two-stress lines and prevailing anapestic movement:

When the midsummer dog-rose
Was sweet in each hedge,
She took little Arthur
To Pendragon Ledge.

CHARACTERISTICS

The metrical romance reflects medieval society and thought. For us, the general impression is often one of remoteness, of a world strangely removed from that of our everyday experiences and common thought. In the romance we find the medieval love of external beauty. The actual events of life, such as are presented, generally take on a bewitching picturesqueness. There is a display of bright colors and of pageantry: beautiful scenes, personages, and events; spectacular and gorgeous court arrays, tournaments, and processions; quaint medieval towers and walls, streets and banquet halls. All these have a part in this attractive world of the metrical romance. In it all things are possible.

Knighthood furnished the mainspring for that medieval society which started the metrical romance on its interesting journey. To appreciate fully the metrical romance we should know something about the ideals and code of conduct that governed chivalry and courtly love in medieval literature. Admission to the order of knighthood in the Middle Ages necessitated the assumption of arduous responsibilities. Upon being admitted into the ranks of chivalry, the newly made knight made a solemn vow to serve the ladies unfailingly; to uphold his king in every exigency; and, above all, to be a true and worthy follower of God. He had to be ready at all times to defend innocent damsels, helpless widows and orphans. Regardless of the conditions involved, he was expected to go to war against the enemies of his king whenever the occasion arose. As a true disciple of God he was required to fight against the infidel, the Crusades furnishing him ample opportunity for the fulfillment of his pledge.

In addition to being called upon to champion the cause of all women, the knight had more especially to choose one damsel as the special object of his favor. To her will he dedicated his life;

and he was always ready to prove her excellence and beauty with his sword and lance. If the superiority of his favorite lady was not challenged, he was expected to travel forth and challenge other knights to deny it. The more perilous the adventure and the greater the odds against him, the greater the glory that he won. In times of peace jousting tournaments gave him an opportunity for the exercise of his knightly arms. Whatever the provocation, always was he to be kind, courteous, brave, loyal, and honorable.

The characters in the typical metrical romance are usually high-born. We read about kings, queens, princesses, knights, barons, and royal enchanters. The prevailing interest in the earliest English romances was not in human life, but in teaching some lesson, in presenting an abstract idea by means of human beings and concrete experiences. Among other things, the narrators of medieval romances were eager to instruct their listeners in the duties, manners, and principles of chivalry. This leaning toward allegory and didacticism led the medieval narrator to fashion superficial characters, too often stiff and lifeless. To this, however, it would be unreasonable to object; for it was in keeping with the general tone of the medieval metrical romance. But after 1400, as we have already observed in earlier paragraphs, the verse romances lost, more and more, this allegorical and moralistic feature, and it occurred only occasionally in such romances as those of Spenser and of Tennyson.

In the metrical romance the characters are not all lovely and of good report. Picturesque and idealistic as romances are, evil is always present, usually in the form of some supernatural being, monsters of various shapes, wicked magicians, or evil knights. Obstacles in the form of unfaithfulness and crossings in love are likewise often found. In whatever guise evil appeared, the true knight was its sworn enemy.

Romances, contrary to ballads and epics, often end happily. Some, like *King Horn* are written almost in the same somber key as *Beowulf*. Others admit of humor, such as *The Boy and the Mantle* and *Arthur at Tarn Wadling*. As a rule, at the end of the story the good characters look out upon a world that beckons them to new and brighter experiences, as did Palamon and Emelye in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*:

For now is Palamon in alle wele,
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;
 And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
 And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
 That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene
 Of jealousye or any other tene.

The metrical romances employ no fixed metrical form. For example, Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* is written in rhyming iambic pentameters:

The rede statue of Mars with spere and targe
 So shyneth in his whyte baner large
 That alle the feeldes gliteren up and down;
 And by his baner born is his penoun
 Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete
 The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete.

Spenser uses the iambic pentameter (except for the last line in each stanza) in *The Faerie Queene*. In *The Lady of the Lake*, Scott has iambic tetrameter lines, rhyming a-a-b-b-c-c, etc. Coleridge's *Christabel* has a prevailingly tetrameter swing, but is irregular in foot, rhyme, and stanza. The following lines will illustrate:

The lovely lady, Christabel,
 Whom her father loves so well,
 What makes her in the wood so late,
 A furlong from the castle gate?
 She had dreams all yesternight
 Of her own betrothed knight;
 And she in the midnight wood will pray
 For the weal of her lover that's far away.

And yet, despite this irregular form, the poem is outstanding for its smoothness of rhythm and its melodic quality.

Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult* is likewise irregular. The trochaic tetrameters are mostly used; but the poem contains also iambic, trimeter, and pentameter lines, as well as variations in rhyme

schemes. As we read the following lines we are not conscious of the three kinds of feet and the two types of lines:

What lady is this, whose silk attire
Gleams so rich in the light of the fire?
The ringlets on her shoulders lying
In their flitting luster vying
With the clasp of burnished gold
Which her heavy robe doth hold.
Her looks are mild, her fingers slight
As the driven snow are white;
But her cheeks are sunk and pale.
Is it that the bleak sea-gale
Beating from the Atlantic sea
On this coast of Brittany,
Nips too keenly the sweet flower?

Tennyson preferred blank verse for the bulk of his romances. Morris uses an interesting rhyme order in *The Defense of Guenevere*. The iambic pentameter three-line stanzas rhyme a-b-a, b-c-b, c-d-c, etc. Notice that the end word in the second line of each stanza furnishes the rhyme sound for lines one and three of the stanza that follows:

But knowing now that they would have her speak,
She threw her wet hair backward from her brow,
Her hand close to her mouth touching her cheek,

As though she had had there a shameful blow,
And feeling it shameful to feel aught but shame
All through her heart, yet felt her cheek burned so,

She must a little touch it; like one lame
She walked away from Gauwaine, with her head
Still lifted up; and on her cheek of flame

The tears dried quick.

Whatever the mechanical form may be, the metrical romance calls for a rhythm that will be suitable in conveying the colorful, refined, emotional and imaginative theme.

The romance is destined to live on through the unborn centuries. The chivalric ideal is not restricted to any land or day.

It is native to all mankind. In Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands rhyming romances appeared of the same sort as those in England, and written at about the same time. The romance affords man an opportunity of thinking about that which brings him intense satisfaction, i.e., the helping of others, repression of evil, the giving of self, glory in the inexplicable, and a fanciful narrative of the deeds of supernatural beings and powers. The very stars above man's head spell romance. On the wings of romance the tired and discouraged mind takes leave of care and depression and lives in the golden age of love and action. There is something about man's nature which urges him to seek the unattainable, which gratifies him in living in the realm of ideality, consigning to death and destruction the evil forces which mar human happiness.

In order that we might further understand the mood and technique of the metrical romance, let us now consider in some detail three romances taken from various periods in English literature: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* of the fourteenth century, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* of the sixteenth century, and Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult* of the nineteenth century.

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight came into being around 1360. It is the culmination of the flowering period of the English medieval romance, likewise the best representative of a great cycle of romances dealing with the exploits of Gawain. We may go further in our praise by saying that it is one of the finest metrical romances in any language. The poem was in all probability a translation from the French; but we are unable to point to any extant French original. Whatever the source, the unknown author was not an imitator of the French. On the contrary, he achieved new effects and original combinations. He combined in characters and metrical form the French, Anglo-Saxon, and Celtic traditions. The Celtic folklore and love of the magical were in his veins. He combined also the primitive and the cultured: his ax, his chapel, and the "test" are primitive; while the Green Knight himself belongs to the cultured class of knights.

In medieval English literature Gawain holds the highest place among the knights of the Round Table. He is likewise the most admirable and versatile of all heroes in medieval romance. His reputation for courage and benevolence was unequaled. The old poets refer to him as "the golden-tongued," the "gay, gracious, and good." He was the epitome of courtesy and knightliness. All the old English chronicles proclaim his fame. King Arthur gave him a prominent place at feasts, and loved him above all others. In the light of the old romances it would appear that Malory and Tennyson were unjustified in picturing Gawain as contemptible.

The theme of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is the triumph of chastity. The story divides itself into two parts: the beheading incident and the chastity test. The Green Knight comes to Arthur's hall on "Christmastide" as the king is about to feast with his knights. The Green Knight issues a challenge in order to try the reputed bravery of Arthur's knights. While they are hesitating, the king himself accepts the challenge. At the insistence of those present, the king is prevailed upon to surrender the suit to Sir Gawain, who, inspired by the king, had also stepped forward to claim the adventure. The acceptor of the challenge is to chop off the Green Knight's head, and is to appear at the Green Chapel a year and a day later to receive a stroke from the Green Knight in return.

Sir Gawain in due time sets out on his quest for the Green Chapel. Over perilous ways, through monster-infested woods, and subjected to the rigors of a North Wales winter, the knight eventually arrives at the castle of the Green Chapel. Here he is tempted by the Green Knight's wife on three successive days. He maintains his purity, but fails to deliver to his host a girdle which he had received from the host's wife on the third day.

Proceeding to the Green Chapel, Sir Gawain offers his neck for the stroke. He escapes with only a scratch—the penalty for his one act of deceit. The Green Knight reveals his identity as the knight's host and lauds him for his purity. Sir Gawain returns to King Arthur's hall, where he is received with honor.

Sir Gawain and The Green Knight, belonging to what is called the Middle English period, is written in a vocabulary that is strange to us. Here are several lines:

Ande al graythed in grene this gome and his wedes:
 A *strayt* cote ful *streght*, that *stek* on his sides;
 A *mere* mantile abof, *mensked* with-inne,
 With *pelure* *pured* apert the *pane* ful clene,

These lines are rendered as follows by Jessie L. Weston:

All green bedight that knight, and green his garments fair
 A narrow coat that clung straight to his side he ware,
 A mantle plain above, lined on the inner side
 With costly fur and fair, set on good cloth and wide,

Referring to the original lines, the alliteration is very evident: the *g's* in the first lines, the *r's* in the second, and the *m's* and *p's* in the last two lines. The stanzas are quite lengthy, all of them ending with four shorter lines which rhyme *a-b-a-b*:

And yet gif hym respite,
 A twelmonyth and a day.
 Now hyghe, and let se tite
 Dar any her-inne oght say.

Many elements combine to make this a truly great romance. Part of its charm lies in its descriptions of nature. The poet observes the change of seasons:

The weather of the world with winter then doth chide,
 The cold no longer clings, the clouds themselves uplift,
 Shed swift the rain, and warm, the showers of springtide drift,
 Fall fair upon the field, the flowers all unfold,
 The grass, and e'en the groves all green ye may behold.
 The birds begin to build, and greet, with joyful song,
 Solace of summer sweet, that followeth ere long—

On bank

The blossoms fair they blow
 In hedgerow rich and rank;
 The birds sing loud and low
 In woodland deep and dank.

After the summer-tide, with gentle winds and soft,
 When zephyr on the sward and seeds doth breathe full oft,
 (Full gladsome is the growth waxing therefrom, I ween,
 Whenas the dewdrops drip from off the leaves so green,

Beneath the blissful beams of the bright summer sun)—
 Then nigheth harvest-tide, hardening the grain anon,
 With warnings to wax ripe ere come the winter cold,
 With drought he drives the dust before him on the wold,
 From off the field it flies, in clouds it riseth high;
 Winds of the welkin strive with the sun, wrathfully,
 The leaves fall from the bough, and lie upon the ground,
 And grey is now the grass that erst all green was found;
 Ripens and rots the fruit that once was flower gay—
 And thus the year doth turn to many a yesterday,
 Winter be come again, as needeth not to say

the sage;

(translation by Jessie L. Weston)

It is the understanding eye of an Anglo-Saxon huntsman, combined with the Celtic sense of weird beauty, that sees nature in this romance. The descriptions of the winter weather and the rugged landscape are reminiscent of *Beowulf*:

Full many a cliff he climbs within that country's range,
 Far flying from his friends he rideth lone and strange;
 At every ford and flood he passed upon his way
 He found a foe before, of fashion grim alway.
 So foul they were, and fell, that he of needs must fight—
 So many a marvel there befell that gallant knight
 That tedious 't were to tell the tithe thereof, I ween—
 Sometimes with worms he warred, or wolves his foes have been;
 Anon with woodmen wild, who in the rocks do hide—
 Of bulls, or bears, or boars, the onslaught doth he bide;
 And giants, who drew anigh, from off the moorland height;
 Doughty in durance he, and shielded by God's might
 Else, doubtless, had he died, full oft had he been slain.
 Yet war, it vexed him less than winter's bitter bane,
 When the clear water cold from out the clouds was shed,
 And froze ere yet it fell on fallow field and dead;
 Then, more nights than enow, on naked rocks he lay,
 And, half slain with the sleet, in harness slept alway.
 While the cold spring that erst its waters clattering flung
 From the cliff high o'erhead, in icicles now hung.
 In peril thus, and pain, and many a piteous plight
 Until the Yuletide Eve along that gallant knight

did fare;
Sir Gawain, at that tide,
To Mary made his prayer,
For fain he was to ride
Where he might shelter share.

(translation by Jessie L. Weston)

The realistic manner in which the poet relates the three hunting scenes—of the hart, of the boar, and of the fox—has all the vigor and details of the actual life. Notice the exuberance of the chase in the following lines:

Full soon they strike the scent, hard by a rock withal,
Huntsmen cheer on those hounds who first upon it fall,
Loudly, with whirling words, and clamour rising high,
The hounds that heard the call haste hither at the cry.
Fast on the scent they fall, full forty at that tide,
Till of the pack the cry was heard both far and wide.
So fiercely rose their bay, the rocks, they rang again,
The huntsmen with their horns to urge them on were fain.
Then, sudden, all the pack together crowd and cry
Before a thicket dense, beneath a crag full high,
Hard by the water's edge—the pack, with one consent,
Run to the rugged rocks, which lie all scarred and rent.
Hounds to the finding fare, the men, they follow keen,
And cast about the crag, and rocks that lie between.
The knights, full well they knew what beast had here its lair
And fain would drive it forth before the bloodhounds there.
Then on the bush they beat, and bid the game arise—
With sudden rush across the beaters, out there hies
A great and grisly boar, most fearsome to behold,
The herd he long had left, for that he waxed full old.
Of beast, and boar, methinks, biggest and fiercest he,
I trow me at his grunt full many grieved must be;
Three at the first assault prone on the earth he threw,
And sped forth at best speed, nor other harm they knew.
Then Hey! and Hey! the knights halloo with shout and cry,
Huntsmen with horn to mouth send forth shrill notes and high,
Merry the noise of men and dogs, I ween, that tide
Who followed on the boar—with boastful shout they cried
 to stay—

The hounds' wrath would he quell
Oft as he turned to bay,
Loudly they yelp and yell,
His tusks they tare away.

(translation by Jessie L. Weston)

While the various hunts are much the same, the poet yet infuses into them such lively characterization and delicate psychology as to make them sparkle with interest. The author of this most singular work so presents the whole of Gawain's adventures as to beguile the reader into accepting them as a reasonable part of man's ordinary existence. The author's interest in details of that which enters into the common routine of life, and his enjoyment of everything that enlivens medieval life gives this romance an interest rich in human and dramatic feeling. How understandingly he portrays the plight of the knight as he seeks to be polite and yet remain pure! The poet's smile can be seen in back of it all, serious though he is in the main.

The author's chief purpose is didactic. Being a moralist, he is careful to point out that deception weakens character. Had Sir Gawain not been guilty of one act of deceit, he would have emerged unscathed from his interview with the Green Knight. The scar, left by his wound, is a constant reminder of his sin. So it is that sin renders the sinner more vulnerable in life's battles.

THE FAERIE QUEENE

Spenser was careful to state in his letter to Sir Walter Raleigh that the general end of all the book (*The Faerie Queene*) is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." The qualities of the metrical romance as a type are subsidiary to the moral purpose; and Spenser uses the idealism of chivalry as a suitable garb with which to clothe, allegorically, the virtues of the truly perfect gentlemen in a highly perfected society.

Spenser worked at *The Faerie Queene* for about twenty years. It contains upwards of 30,000 lines—one of the longest poems in the English language. Spenser's original intention had been to make it still longer, to write twenty-four books, each of twelve cantos; but only a little more than a fourth was actually com-

pleted. The greater part of the poem was written in Ireland, amid scenes of misery and disorder. It is not too much to say that these external circumstances left their impress upon the poem as it was unfolding in the poet's mind.

Of the twenty-four books which Spenser planned to write, twelve were to portray twelve moral virtues as shown in Prince Arthur; the other twelve were to depict the twelve political virtues of King Arthur. Only six books were completed. The first recounts the experiences of the Red Cross Knight, or Holiness; book two, Sir Guyon, or Temperance; book three, Britomarte, or Chastity; book four, Cambel and Triamond, or Friendship; book five, Sir Artegall or Justice; and book six, Calidore, or Courtesy.

Spenser's idea was to center the various adventures around the Faerie Queene (Queen Elizabeth, to whom the poem was dedicated), from whose court and at whose appointment the various knights were to go forth on their quest. Spenser regarded it as a work which was "to represent all the moral virtues, assigning to every virtue a knight as the patron and defender of the same, in whose actions and feats of arms and chivalry the operations of that virtue, whereof he is the protector, are to be expressed, and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same to be beaten down or overcome." Prince Arthur, the embodiment of the Aristotelian virtue of magnificence, meets the knights one by one as he searches for his bride, the Faerie Queene. He rescues them by his great power and skill. The main theme of the poem, then, is either that of a noble knight, tempted, fighting valiantly, triumphing, and at last being delivered; or that of a distressed lady, the object of plots and danger, but finally being rescued.

The Faerie Queene differs from the romances which preceded it in its extremely allegorical nature. It goes far beyond all its predecessors in its moralistic purpose. Both the moral and the romantic spirit of the age find a place in the poem. It serves as a huge mirror in which Elizabethan England may be seen. Spenser's fairyland is really England. In a sense the poem is a eulogistic pageant of England. The patriotic element, contrary to the older romances, finds here a place. What Spenser had in mind as he wrote was "the idealizations of actual men and actual deeds,

—the great Elizabethan age in all its hopes and fears, its passions of love and of hate, its anathemas and its adorations." Behind this romance was a vigorous people: writers, thinkers, statesmen, traders, sea fighters. We find, also, the Renaissance ideals of gallantry, the attitude of the Elizabethans toward everyday life—their aspirations, defeats and triumphs.

Despite Spenser's purpose to portray and to extol the virtues and to present philosophical speculations, the present age, strange to say, if it reads *The Faerie Queene* at all, reads it, not for its historical references, or from the standpoint of its author's intention, but rather for its romantic qualities. The local attachments and allegorical dress does not appeal to us today. We read it, rather, for its excellent poetry. Spenser uses what has come to be called the Spenserian stanza (see page 66). The rhyme and rhythm are superb:

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spread so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faire harbour that them seems, so in they entred ar.

Jarring elements and unpleasant sounds are absent. The lines swing along like the music from an orchestra of stringed instruments. Not less is he a painter of verbal pictures. Whether it is a lowly hermitage,

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
In travell to and froe: a litle wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and eventyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway,

or the expanseless Heavens themselves,

By this the Northerne wagoner had set
His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre
That was in Ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To all that in the wide deepe wandring arre;
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the Easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome did fill,

we are conscious of the hand of a master artist. The chivalric element, too, is not wanting:

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull Knight could not for ought be staide;
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armour made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

We read *The Faerie Queene* today, then, for its melody, its inimitable fancy, its richness of invention and imagination, and its chivalric episodes. Spenser the moralist may be forgotten; instead, the reader should take a delightful walk into an entrancing land, peopled by gallant and picturesque figures of knights and ladies, of dwarfs, giants, and monsters.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

The legend of Tristram and Iseult is of Celtic origin, composed in the French language, and put into its present shape in England. According to Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, "The king of Ireland, at Tristram's solicitations, promised to bestow his daughter Iseult in marriage on King Marc. The mother of Iseult gave to her daughter's confidante a philter, or love-potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage Tristram and Iseult, on their voyage to Cornwall, unfortunately

partook. Its influence, during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers."

Their mutual love, having come to the notice of King Marc, resulted in Tristram's banishment. He went to Brittany, where he was married to "Iseult with the White Hands," more out of gratitude than love. Later he was made a member of the Round Table; and in King Arthur's service performed many heroic deeds. He returned again to Iseult of Brittany, his long-neglected wife. There, wounded and sick, he longed to see Iseult of Ireland, and forthwith dispatched a servant to Queen Iseult of Cornwall to petition her to visit him in Brittany.

In *Tristram and Iseult*, Matthew Arnold pictures for us the last days of the two lovers. Tristram, on his death-bed, weak and delirious, longs for Iseult of Ireland. It is a cold and bleak December night. His page and Iseult of Brittany are beside his bed. The setting is one of desolation and despair. Eventually a sail appears on the sea—his own Iseult is coming. The lovers, parted by fate during life, are joined in death. Tristram, with but a few moments to live, would say much to her, but is denied. "I am dying," he whispers to Iseult,

Start not, nor look wildly!
Me, thy living friend, thou canst not save.
But, since living we were united,
Go not far, O Iseult! from my grave

Iseult feverishly would restrain him:

Tristram!—Tristram! stay—receive me with thee!
Iseult leaves thee, Tristram, never more.

The bodies of these matchless lovers were borne over the sea to Cornwall and placed in King Marc's Chapel, "in Tyntagel old."

In sharp contrast to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Faerie Queene*, the allegorical and the didactic in this romance have been excluded, admitting only chivalric love. It still retains, however, the knight, the princesses, and the romantic setting accompanying them; but the knight is not engaged in pursuing giants and knights, but love.

The verse structure in Arnold's poem is very irregular. When the theme turns to the youthful lovers, gay and strong, the meter takes on a happy, skipping grace:

Ah, sweet angels, let him dream!
Keep his eyelids! let him seem
Not this fever-wasted wight
Thinned and paled before his time,
But the brilliant youthful knight
In the glory of his prime,
Sitting in the gilded barge,
At thy side, thou lovely charge,
Bending gaily o'er thy hand,
Iseult of Ireland!
And she too, that princess fair,
If her bloom be now less rare,
Let her have her youth again—
Let her be as she was then!
Let her have her proud dark eyes,
And her petulant quick replies—
Let her sweep her dazzling hand
With its gesture of command,
And shake back her raven hair
With the old imperious air!

When the memory goes back sadly to the love that is gone, and when the change of the years weighs heavily upon the sick knight, the rhythm takes on a more steadied aspect:

Iseult of Brittany?—but where
Is that other Iseult fair,
That proud, first Iseult, Cornwall's queen?
She, whom Tristram's ship of yore
From Ireland to Cornwall bore,
To Tyntagel, to the side
Of King Marc, to be his bride?
She who, as they voyaged, quaffed
With Tristram that spiced magic draft,
Which since then forever rolls
Through their blood, and binds their souls,
Working love, but working teen?—
There were two Iseults who did sway
Each her hour of Tristram's day;
But one possessed his waning time,
The other his resplendent prime.

Behold her here, the patient flower,
 Who possessed his darker hour!
 Iseult of the Snow-White Hand
 Watches pale by Tristram's bed.
 She is here who had his gloom,
 Where art thou who hadst his bloom?
 One such kiss as those of yore
 Might thy dying knight restore!
 Does the love-draft work no more?
 Art thou cold, or false, or dead,
 Iseult of Ireland?

Sinking back upon his pillow, the knight lapses into black despair:

Loud howls the wind, sharp patters the rain,
 And the knight sinks back on his pillows again.
 He is weak with fever and pain,
 And his spirit is not clear.
 Hark! he mutters in his sleep,
 As he wanders far from here,
 Changes place and time of year,
 And his closed eye doth sweep
 O'er some fair unwintery sea,
 Not this fierce Atlantic deep,
 While he mutters brokenly.

Notice how the action is slowed up in lines four to six. Arnold has breathed into his poem something of the dreaminess, the distant enchantment, and the undying passion which entranced those in the days when love was everything.

QUESTIONS

1. Make a list of characteristics which the epic and the romance have in common.
2. Contrast *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Which poem shows the more imagination? Which depicts the deeper human emotion? The nobler ideals?
 In which poem is the love for beauty and refinement more apparent?

3. What justification would we have for classifying the ballad, *Robin Hood and the Prince of Aragon*, as a metrical romance? What relationship between the ballad and romance does this poem reveal?
4. Make a study of the type of society reflected in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. How did they live? What were some of their social customs?
5. Contrast the ideal knight as set forth in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and in Tennyson's *Sir Galahad*.
6. Upon the basis of what internal evidence would you conclude that the social class reflected in the metrical romance is a different one from that reflected in the popular ballad?
7. What differences do you notice in the chivalric ideals of Sir Gawain and those of Lancelot in Tennyson's *Lancelot and Elaine*?
8. Characterize the typical medieval romantic hero. In what respects does he differ from the epic hero?
9. Wherein does the medieval romantic hero differ from the modern motion picture hero?
10. What attitude do the people of today have toward romance in general? Consider the typical motion-picture show, grand opera, and musical comedy.
11. Contrast the hero of one of the metrical romances with one of a modern novel. How do you account for the change?
12. In what respects does *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* differ from *Beowulf* in points of description and characterization?
13. In what aspects of the medieval romance is the modern reader interested?
14. Make a study of the supernatural elements in the first two books of *The Faerie Queene* and in any one of the nineteenth century metrical romances.
15. What phases of the medieval romance are especially amusing to Chaucer, as revealed in his *Sir Thopas*?
16. Make a study of the verse form in Coleridge's *Christabel* and *Kubla Kahn*.
17. Make a study of the poetic technique as employed by the ballad and by the metrical romance.
18. What medieval elements are discernible in Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*?

19. Compare in thought and poetic structure William Morris' *The Defense of Guenevere* with John Masefield's *The Taking of Gwenivere*.
20. What differences do you notice in the characterization found in a nineteenth century romance and, let us say, in *The Squire of Low Degree*? How do you account for this difference?

GENERAL LIST OF METRICAL ROMANCES

English Romances:

Anonymous: King Alisaunder

Sir Cleges

Richard Coeur de Lion

Amis and Amiloun

Sir Isumbras

Emare

Amadas

King Horn

Horn Child

Beves of Hampton (Hamtown)

Guy of Warwick

Gamelyn

Seven Sages of Rome

Floris and Blanchefleur

Sir Orfeo

Ipomedon

The Squire of Low Degree

Sir Triamour

Sir Degare

Mort Arthure

Roland and Vernagu

Sir Otuel

Sir Ferumbras

Havelok

Geste Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy

Sir Tristram

Gwain and Gawain

The Wedding of Sir Gawain

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Robert of Cicily
 Barlaam and Josaphaz
 Le Morte Arthur
 Geoffrey Chaucer: The Knight's Tale
 The Squire's Tale
 Sir Thopas
 Edmund Spenser: The Faerie Queene
 Sir Walter Scott: The Lady of the Lake
 The Lay of the Last Minstrel
 Marmion
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Christabel
 Kubla Kahn
 Thomas Moore: Lalla Rookh
 Lord Byron: The Bride of Abydos
 The Corsair
 The Giaour
 Lara
 The Siege of Corinth
 John Keats: The Eve of St. Agnes
 Alfred Tennyson: The Idylls of the King
 The Lady of Shalott
 Morte D'Arthur
 The Princess
 Sir Galahad
 Matthew Arnold: Tristram and Iseult
 William Morris: The Chapel in Lyonesse
 The Defense of Guenevere
 Sir Galahad, A Christmas Mystery
 The Haystack in the Floods
 King Arthur's Tomb
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: Tale of Balen
 Tristram of Lyonesse

American Romances:

James Russell Lowell: The Vision of Sir Launfal
 Edwin Arlington Robinson: Merlin
 Lancelot
 Tristram

TALE

WHILE Psyche was in Love's mansion, in William Morris' *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*,

She saw a book wherein old tales were writ,
And by the window sat, to read in it
Until the dusk had melted into night.

Many, like Psyche, have been charmed by the hour while reading tales, old and new. They hold for everybody an inexplicable fascination.

HISTORY

Like the other narrative types which we have already considered, the tale is a very old form. The *Jatakas*, a collection of Indian tales, was composed about 400 B.C. The Greek fables of Aesop (620-560 B.C.) and Phaedrus' collection of Indian tales (first century A.D.) are forerunners of the modern tales as we now know them.

In England the first metrical tales appeared in medieval times. Some of these tales, such as *Dame Sirith* of the thirteenth century, were oriental in character. The so-called *Fabliaux* were likewise of oriental origin. They were "merry tales in verse," picturing not the ideal or the sentimental, as in the romance, but the practical and the realistic. Like the ballads, they were brief and pointed, as may be seen in *The Land of Cockayne*, a thirteenth century fabliau; and in *The Miller of Abyngdon*, *The Friar and the Boy*, and the *Tale of the Basin* of the fourteenth century. Other tales, such as *The Ghost of Sir Guy* and *Heinrich the Unfortunate*, called *Pious Tales*, were not unlike the fabliaux in scope and treatment, but were written with a different motive. Being the work of monks and clerks, they were religious in nature and had moral instruction and edification

as their chief theme. These tales were generally improbable, and set forth superstitious tales of an absurd, if not puerile nature.

Except for their historical value, these foregoing tales of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are unimportant and for us rather uninteresting. It is not until we come to John Gower's group of tales, called *Confessio Amantis* (1386-1390), that we find occasional episodes that appeal to the general reader. Gower sees that he cannot reform the world and so he decides to write on love, a universal subject. In the same century, a few years later, Chaucer began *The Canterbury Tales* (1387), a series of humorous and realistic stories.

There is a lapse of two centuries before we find the next metrical tales of importance, namely those of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1593) and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (printed 1593) in the age of Queen Elizabeth. With the possible exception of Dryden's *The Cock and the Fox*, which belongs to the Restoration period, we must skip over the greater part of the eighteenth century to the time when Burns wrote his *Tam o' Shanter* and Wordsworth his two engaging verse tales, *Michael* and *Laodamia*.

With Wordsworth we have springing up a new interest in the lives of everyday men and women and in the common objects of nature. Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*, Tennyson's *Dora*, Browning's *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, Morris' *The Earthly Paradise*, and Stevenson's *Heather Ale* are the outstanding verse tales that were written during the nineteenth century that followed. Interest in tales continued through the last decades of this century on into the twentieth century with such notable contributions as Yeats' *Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea*, Gibson's *The Blind Rower* and *The Brothers*, Masfield's *Dauber* and *The Everlasting Mercy*, and Noyes' *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*.

In American literature the first tales of any consequence appear in the nineteenth century. Joseph R. Drake's *The Culprit Fay* (written 1816) belongs to what is often regarded as the New York Period (1787-1830) of American literature. In the succeeding New England Period (1830-1860), we find such metrical tales as Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Whittier's *The Tent on the Beach*, Poe's *The Raven*, Holmes' *The Deacon's*

Masterpiece, and Lowell's *Rhoecus*. In the period marking the triumph of realism, beginning with 1890, at least three poets contributed noteworthy tales. Robinson's *Isaac and Archibald*, Amy Lowell's *The Shadow*, and Frost's *The Death of the Hired Man* are among the best in American literature.

CHARACTERISTICS

The metrical tale, like most other forms, has changed from century to century in keeping with the conditions amid which it had to live. We today are concerned primarily with those tales that have been written since Chaucer's birth. When considered from the standpoint of the English and American examples, the metrical tale is the one narrative type that selects for its characters men and women chiefly from the common class. It is more representative of all classes. Humor enters more freely. The epic, romance, and ballad would not have permitted the overflowing sort of humor which we find in Burns' *Tam o' Shanter*.

In construction, the tale is usually very simple. It presents but a single series of closely connected events. In this respect it is but an extended ballad. The tale is generally shorter than the romance and epic, standing midway between these and the ballad. It leaves a single impression, and is content to tell its simple, straightforward story in a natural, easy manner. In this connection note the uninvolved meter of Stevenson's *Heather Ale* as exemplified in the first two stanzas:

From the bonny bells of heather
They brewed a drink long-syne,
Was sweeter far than honey,
Was stronger far than wine.
They brewed it and they drank it,
And lay in a blessed swound
For days and days together
In their dwellings underground.

There rose a king in Scotland,
A fell man to his foes,
He smote the Picts in battle,
He hunted them like roes.

Over miles of the red mountain
He hunted as they fled,
And strewed the dwarfish bodies
Of the dying and the dead.

or observe the unadorned verses in the opening lines of Tennyson's *Dora*:

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

The tale is content to do, structurally, in the realm of poetry, what the short story does in prose.

The tale has a wider range of subject matter than either the epic or romance; but whatever the subject, it aims to be realistic. It may present any emotion or deal with any phase of man's life. The characters are usually living human beings who deport themselves in keeping with rational standards of life. The general impression is, therefore, one of reality. The unbounded fancy and chivalric glamour of the romance is not here. The heroic stature of the epic is not for the tale, nor the supernaturalism of the ballad.

SINGLE TALES

Metrical tales may be divided into two general classes, those that are not a part of a sequence or group of tales and those that are. For convenience, we shall call the former *Single Tales* and the latter *Groups of Tales*. The single tales are not unlike those which compose the group tales, except that in the former the personal element enters more prominently. This is especially noticeable in such an exceptional lyrical-narrative poem as Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*. Apart from the narrative element, as seen in the slow and tortuous occurrence of horrible events, Bonnivard gives expression to the benumbing and chilling effects of dungeon confinement upon his mind and soul.

His brothers, who were thrust into prison with him, had died; and in the gloom and terror of the situation, Bonnivard lost all sense of time and feeling:

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night—it was not day—
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

Such poems as Poe's *The Raven* and Browning's *The Two Poets of Croisic* present a similar difficulty for classification. Indeed we should not quarrel with him who should call them lyrics. The reflective and motivating elements, therefore, are more pronounced in the single tales. In the main, they are also more realistic. Though impossible incidents are set forth in such examples as Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and Browning's *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, these tales are eclipsed in number by a group of poems like Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*, Masfield's *The Rower*, and Gibson's *The Brothers*. The single tales are to be found in every period of English and American literature; but like the literary ballad, the tale comes into its fullest fruition in the nineteenth century. Of the large number written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Wordsworth's *Michael*, Burns' *Tam o' Shanter*

and Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* are typical as well as notable examples.

In keeping with his theory of poetry, Wordsworth clothed the story of *Michael* in the simplest language:

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.

.

His helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house....

.

The pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,...

Michael loved his only son, Luke, very dearly and had him ever by his side. One day unforeseen misfortunes came along, which took more than half his scanty substance. Old and disheartened, Michael, with his wife Isabel, resolved to send Luke to a wealthy kinsman, by whose help and Luke's industry, the loss would quickly be repaired. Before Luke's departure, the father and son entered into a covenant:

'Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go.' At this the old man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a long silence, he resumed:
'This was a work for us; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.

Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part,
 I will do mine . . .’

At first they received encouraging letters from Luke; but by and by the son

gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

Michael and his wife died in despair. The poet's skill in presenting these pastoral sentiments in a simple, straightforward manner results in a story that makes the heart ache. For sheer pathos and emotional force the poem is admirable. As we read it, we are impressed with the simple words. They are in the vocabulary of the average child. The lines have no rhyme; they employ no complicated artistic devices. The lines are iambic pentameter; but the poet seemingly puts forth no special effort to hold himself to the verse pattern. The whole poem reads easily and naturally.

Quite unlike *Michael* is the boisterous *Tam o' Shanter*, known throughout the English-speaking nations. Burns knew the waywardnesses of the human heart and delighted in presenting the humorous as well as the more sober aspects of mankind. In *Tam o' Shanter* Burns gave himself whole-heartedly to mirth, and drew such a figure in Tam as will live with other immortal creations. Who does not know the following lines, descriptive of Tam's carefree indulgence in ale with Souter Johnie and the Landlady:

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himsel among the nappy;
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

or the reflective turn in the exquisite figures:

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.

A lively meter characterizes the entire poem. Note especially the quick action in the following lines:

As Tammie glowered, amazed, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Here, then, in *Tam o' Shanter* are combined a mock heroic tone, a sprightly rhythm, an infectious humor, a sympathetic humanity, and withal a good tale. The poem is the best of a class which is regrettably small in English literature. In American literature, something of Burns' boisterous fun is revived in Holmes' *How the Old Horse Won the Bet*.

Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* belongs to that class of tales which derive their story from classical and medieval sources. In this instance Arnold's tale is based on a summary of an episode in the outstanding medieval epic of Persia, the *Shah Namah*. A father's combat with his unknown son is a familiar device in story-telling. Sohrab, representing the Afrasiabian armies, meets in single combat his own father Rustum who champions the Persian cause. Since Rustum fights under an assumed name, a usage common in chivalrous combat, Sohrab has no means of identifying his opponent. Nevertheless, the son's instinct so strongly asserts itself that he spares his unknown antagonist in their second encounter and so reluctantly continues the fight that he arouses the old warrior's ire. In the third meeting young Sohrab falls, a victim of his own heart rather

than of his father's superior skill. In the pangs of death Sohrab reveals his own identity. Sohrab's instinctive recognition during the combat, together with the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the fight, which make identification well-nigh impossible, add an element of deep pathos to the story. The dying ecstasy of Sohrab at discovering his father, and the remorse of Rustum at having slain his illustrious son, add to the narrative a most touching element. Sohrab, seeing his father's overwhelming sorrow, asks him to allay his grief:

...for I but meet today
The doom that at my birth was written down
In heaven, and thou art heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I knew it: but Fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; Fate, Fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found.
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: "My son!"
Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in heaven that this should be.

We can but wish that Arnold had given to the world many more such poems that have something of Homer's majestic ring.

Sohrab and Rustum is written in blank verse. Long similes appear frequently throughout the poem. The following, though not the longest, will illustrate:

As a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift; at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—

So delicately pricked the sign appeared
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.

Perhaps the most beautiful lines are those which characterize the uncertainty of life:

For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour.

Among the twentieth century tales, none is more engaging than John Masefield's *Dauber*. This is a story of a young man's going to sea as an ordinary sailor in order that he might become acquainted with life on board ship and thereby be enabled the better to paint those fascinating ships of the sea. Taunted and buffeted, he holds to his objective. While rounding Cape Horn, he proves his manhood as he takes his place among the others in the cold, agonizing task of taking in the sails when the ship suddenly enters the path of a raging tempest. Having won the admiration of his comrades, later during the storm he is hurled to death on the deck. Masefield's account of the storm as the boat rounds the Horn is a marvel of sustained poetic description, almost bewildering in its realism.

In strong contrast to the foregoing is Wilfrid W. Gibson's calm but forceful *The Blind Rower*. This poem relates an incident in the lives of a father and his blind son. The son was accustomed to row his father to the oyster beds, his father steering with the tiller. On this occasion the father dies from a stroke while they are returning. The blind son, utterly unaware of the fatal incident, rows gaily on, safely by rock and reef. Not until he pushes the boat on the shore does he discover his dead father; and

So, ever restless, to and fro,
In every sort of weather,
The blind lad wanders on the shore,
And hearkens to the foam.

His hand has never touched an oar,
Since they came home together—
The blind, who rowed his father home—
The dead, who steered his blind son home.

GROUPS OF TALES

In English and American literature there are to be found instances where the author has so joined a number of otherwise separate tales, loosely but perceptibly connected, as to constitute one large narrative unit. The first notable occurrence of this in English literature is Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

The idea of combining a series of unrelated tales in prose or poetry was not new with Chaucer. The Italian, Boccaccio (1313-75), employed a similar device in his *Decameron*, as did the Englishman John Gower (1325?-1408) in *Confessio Amantis*. In a series of early English romances, such as the *Gesta Romanorum* and the *Process of the Seven Sages*, we also find a group of stories united under one heading in effect not so much unlike *The Canterbury Tales*.

The occasion of twenty-nine pilgrims' going on a journey to the shrine of Saint Thomas à Becket at Canterbury is the unifying element in Chaucer's series of tales. Since the spring of 1385 Chaucer lived at Greenwich, where he could see the pilgrims from every county in England proceeding on their way to the shrine. He had often watched them and overheard the conversations of these diverse groups of men and women. It suggested to him later the plan of using a pilgrimage as the occasion for story-telling.

In the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer describes the pilgrims. A more interesting group would be difficult to find. As they are waiting at Tabard Inn, we see a Knight, who loved chivalry, truth, and honor, and who had been in fifteen "mortal" battles. Beside him stands his son, a young Squire, who has curly locks, which appear "as they were leyed in presse." A Yeoman in coat and hood of green and a Nun, who smiled full simple and coy, sang through her nose, and deported herself very daintily. A Monk with a bald head "that shoon as any glas," a wanton and merry Friar, whose begging receipts exceeded his regular income and to whom the taverns

in every town were well known, occupied an important place in the motley company. There were other interesting individuals in the group: The Merchant with a forked beard; the Clerk who rode a horse as lean as a rake; the busy Sergeant of the Law; the convivial Frankeleyn; the Shipman who rode upon a nag as best as he knew how; the Doctor who cured his patients by magic; the Wife of Bath who had five husbands and wore scarlet-red stockings; the good Parson; the lean Reve; the Sommoner, of whose fire-red "cherubinnes" face children were afraid, and who spoke Latin when drunk.

Chaucer's original plan was to permit each of the thirty (including himself) to tell four stories, thus making one hundred and twenty in all. This stupendous task he never accomplished. Twenty-four were written, some of which were never finished. As the pilgrims move along, they talk among themselves. There is frequent squabbling. They give expression to their own pre-occupations and feelings when criticizing their fellow travelers or defending their own eccentric manner of life. In short, Chaucer makes each story-teller a living being. The Wife of Bath is his most vigorous and most colorful creation.

There is something about Chaucer's turn of mind and art which prevents *The Canterbury Tales* from becoming dull. These narratives are enlivened by an admixture of moral instruction, bright colors, fitful gaiety, sly humor, sharply outlined characterization, pathos, and naïve humanity. The very circumlocutions of certain of the pilgrim story-tellers are not objectionable when considered in the light of the narrator's eccentricities. The Wife of Bath's prefatory remarks about her former husbands constitute a gem in self-revelation. So representative is this group which Chaucer sketched that not a limited class, but the entire English nation is mirrored in the poet's lines. With such impartiality has the poet permitted each individual to speak that he painted with great fidelity the very heart of the society of his time. Chaucer was interested in distinct outlines and in occupational contrasts, so that we have in *The Canterbury Tales* a very human document of man and manners.

There is an attempt made to suit each story to the teller of it. The Clerk relates the tale of Griselda, the Prioress narrates the story of the little child who sang *Alma redemptore's*, and

the Nun tells her tale of the miracle of St. Cecilia. Even in the manner of telling does each character reveal his essential traits.

Chaucer went to classical and to medieval literature for the tales which he re-created. The Manciple's tale, for instance, is based upon Ovid's fable of Apollo and Coronis, and the Clerk's tale is taken from Petrarch's Latin rendering of a *Novella* of Boccaccio. The Wife of Bath's tale was suggested by an old fairy tale, while the Nun's Priest's tale is derived from a Medieval beast fable.

Judged from the standpoint of narrative skill and human elements portrayed, the *Prioress's Tale*, the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, and the *Pardoner's Tale* are the best of the series. The last of these is a story of three riotous fellows who vow to slay "false traytour Deeth." They meet an old man who directs them to a grove near-by where, he says, they will find Death. Eagerly approaching the place, they discover a "precious hord" of gold, about "eighte bussshels" as they thought. One of the three is dispatched to town to fetch bread and wine. Meanwhile the two who remain to guard the gold resolve to take the life of the third when he returns in order that they may divide the gold in two shares. The one who goes for wine also has dark designs, and places poison in two bottles of wine which he intends to give to his two partners. Upon his return he is killed. Having killed their partner, the two murderers gulp down the poisoned wine and die instantly. Detached from the Pardoner's introductory moralistic remarks, the story itself is a masterpiece in narrative art. With a few simple and direct strokes it hurries to the tragic close:

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
 This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
 In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
 And borwed of him large botels three;
 And in the two his poyson poured he;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
 For al the night he shoop him for to swinkle,
 In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
 And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.

What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
"Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie."
And with that word it happed him, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two.

As seen in the foregoing excerpt, the meter is that of iambic pentameter, and the lines are arranged in rhyming couplets.

Though Chaucer had many imitators, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that we find a convincing imitation of *The Canterbury Tales*. *The Earthly Paradise*, by William Morris, is however more than an offspring of its illustrious predecessor, however sincere and inspired may have been Morris' high tribute in *L'Envoi* to his "Master Geoffrey Chaucer." Since these authors lived in entirely different ages, their tales were actuated by different motives: Chaucer's by an undeviating interest in human nature, Morris' by the magic touch of nineteenth century impressionism.

The Earthly Paradise is a notable achievement, consisting of over 42,000 lines of rhymed verse. A series of twenty-five tales is told, if we include the story of *The Wanderers*. These various tales are bound together by a device similar to that used by Chaucer. Some eighty adventurers in the Middle Ages fled from a pestilence-stricken Norwegian city in search of an Earthly Paradise. In two boats, the "Fighting Man" and the "Rose Garland," these men sailed on and on in the Atlantic in search of a land where they heard mortals might find eternal youth and escape death. After many vicissitudes a small group of them eventually land in a nameless city, inhabited by descendants of early Greek voyagers. These Greeks, though long separated from their native land, have nevertheless preserved the traditions of ancient Greece. The voyagers themselves are of Germanic Norse, and Breton origin, and have brought with them a goodly store of medieval tales and chronicles. Having told their adventures to these Greeks, the voyagers are received

warmly, being regarded by the Greeks as happy links between themselves and their own long-lost and beloved country. After a time

When new-born March made fresh the hopeful air,
The wanderers sat within a chamber fair,
Guests of that city's rulers, when the day
Far from the sunny noon had fallen away;
The sky grew dark, and on the window-pane
They heard the beating of the sudden rain.
Then, all being satisfied with plenteous feast,
There spoke an ancient man, the land's chief priest,
Who said, "Dear guests, the year begins to-day,
And fain are we, before it pass away,
To hear some tales of that now altered world,
Wherefrom our fathers in old time were hurled
By the hard hands of fate and destiny.
Nor would ye hear perchance unwillingly
How we have dealt with stories of the land
Wherein the tombs of our forefather's stand:
Wherefore henceforth two solemn feasts shall be
In every month, at which some history
Shall crown our joyance; and this day, indeed,
I have a story ready for our need,
If ye will hear it, though perchance it is
That many things are writ amiss,
This part forgotten, that part grown too great,
For these things, too, are in the hands of fate.

Then follow the stories, one after another, in the manner of the refugees in the villa of Boccaccio or of the Canterbury Pilgrims on their way along an English wood.

Apart from the unifying force of the *Prologue*, these tales are further tied together by interludes, which describe the respective months or characterize the groups and their feelings as they gather month after month to listen to the stories. In this way, an interplay between the stories is achieved; and the whole network of tales becomes one huge piece of poetic fabric. Were there even any question about the unity of these pieces, the *Epilogue* would confirm their continuity:

So is a year passed of the quiet life,
That these old men from such mishap and strife,
Such springing up and dying out of dreams,
Had won at last.

With the exception of *The Man Who Never Laughed Again*, the stories in *The Earthly Paradise* are derived from classical, medieval, and Scandinavian sources. These are arranged in such a sequence as to insure variety in theme and atmosphere.

The theme of *The Earthly Paradise* runs through all its lines like a faintly perceptible but powerful incense. Man desires to escape death; but at the same time he is aware that after all the brevity of life intensifies and sweetens life. The entire poetic symphony is permeated by a note of sadness, prepared by the *Prologue*, carried forward by the tales and interludes, and once more sounded in the *Epilogue*:

And these folk—these poor tale-tellers who strove
In their wild way the heart of Death to move,
E'en as we singers, and failed, e'en as we,—
Surely on their side I at least will be,
And deem that when at last, their shame and doubt,
Shamed them not now, nor did they doubt it good,
That they in arms against that Death had stood.

Nothing could be more fitting than that the name of William Morris should be associated with *The Earthly Paradise*, since he himself sought all his life to create an earthly paradise, furnished with beautiful things and peopled by those who found happiness in their daily activity.

Despite the remarkably even excellence of all the tales, there are two that particularly deserve the reader's attention: *The Story of Cupid and Psyche* and *The Lovers of Gudrun*. The first of these is a delicately rendered story of a king's daughter who was so beautiful that the people were prompted to forget Venus. The anger of Venus was thereby aroused, particularly so when Love also wooed Psyche for his own. So surpassingly fair was she that

From place to place Love followed her that day
And ever fairer to his eyes she grew,
So that at last when from her bower he flew,
And underneath his feet the moonlit sea

Went shepherding his waves disorderly,
 He swore that of all Gods and men, no one
 Should hold her in his arms but he alone;
 That she should dwell with him in glorious wise
 Like to a Goddess in some paradise;
 Yea, he would get from Father Jove this grace
 That she should never die, but her sweet face
 And wonderful fair body should endure
 Till the foundations of the mountains sure
 Were molten in the sea;

Taken to Love's music palace, Psyche gazed

upon the wonders of the place,
 And in the silver mirrors saw her face
 Grown strange to her amidst that loneliness,
 And stooped to feel the web her feet did press,
 Wrought by the brown slim-figured Indian's toil
 Amidst the years of war and vain turmoil;
 Or she the figures of the hangings felt,
 Or daintily the unknown blossoms smelt,
 Or stood and pondered what new thing might mean
 The images of knight and king and queen
 Wherewith the walls were pictured here and there,
 Or touched rich vessels with her fingers fair,
 And o'er her delicate smooth cheek would pass
 The long-fixed bubbles of strange works of glass:
 So wandered she amidst these marvels new
 Until anigh the noontide now it grew.

In an unhappy moment she was ensnared into doubts by her envying sisters and lost her invisible lover. Thus forsaken, she wandered through the world, the object of Venus' wrath. After a time Venus repented; and at the importunities of Love, Psyche was made immortal by the Father, who kindly addressed her:

Drink now, O beautiful, and have no fear!
 For with this draught shalt thou be born again,
 And live for ever free from care and pain.

This tale should be read for its dreamy, fragrant atmosphere. A colorful and lovely thread runs throughout this piece of poetic

tapestry. In it there is as much of the sensuous and of the immortal as the ordinary human being can readily conceive. It is easily Morris' most imaginative creation.

Of a vastly different nature is *The Lovers of Gudrun*. Morris' interest in the Scandinavian sagas is here evident. If *Cupid and Psyche* is extravagantly beautiful, *The Lovers of Gudrun* is bleakly tragic. It is written in a different key. Kiartan Olafson moves about with something of an epic stride. The cold and barren shores of Iceland cast over the poem a gray shadow. Life is stern. There is no respite. Hearts are chilled as Kiartan, Bodli, and Gudrun play their deadly game of love. The whole story is suggested in Guest's prophetic interpretation of Gudrun's dream as the story opens:

Methinks a stirring life shall hap to thee.

Thou shalt be loved and love; wrongs shalt thou give,

Wrongs shalt thou take, and therewithal outlive

Both wrongs, and love, and joy, and dwell alone

When all the fellows of thy life are gone.

Kiartan and Gudrun are passionately in love with one another. Kiartan goes on a voyage to Norway with his foster-brother Bodli, who also loves Gudrun. While staying with King Olaf of Norway, Kiartan falls in love with Ingibjorg, the king's daughter. Bodli returns to Iceland. Though loyal to Kiartan for a time, he marries Gudrun after both believe Kiartan won by the Norwegian princess. But Kiartan returns from Norway and finds the man whom he dearly loves married to the woman whose love he returns to claim. At the same time Bodli loves Gudrun more than Kiartan ever could or Gudrun and Kiartan ever knew. The tragic strength of the poem lies in the deftness with which Morris portrays the love of Bodli for his friend simultaneously with that of both men for Gudrun. With rare insight and skill has Morris drawn the pathetic figure of Bodli as his soul winces under the condemnatory glance of Gudrun and the bitter friendliness of Kiartan.

The entire tale is tinctured with a certain inevitableness that well-nigh verges upon the melodramatic. Kiartan's farewell to Gudrun, and later to Ingibjorg; his leavetaking of King Olaf of Norway; Gudrun's denunciation of Bodli; the forced social visits between Herdholt and Bathstead; and Bodli's unpremedi-

tated slaying of Kiartan—all are impressive moments in this epical tale. Though the interest ebbs with the death of Kiartan, the very last line blends fittingly with the title. When asked by her son which of all the men she knew she loved the best, the reader's conviction is succinctly echoed in Gudrun's reply:

I did the worst to him I loved the most.

Captivating as these individual tales are, *The Earthly Paradise* is greatest when taken in its entirety. William Morris regarded them as a large piece of tapestry, co-ordinating every tale as he would a panel in a large design. Prologue, tales, lyrical interludes, epilogue, and L'Envoi constitute one huge picture, seen through a highly refractory atmosphere, and blending into one dream-like fantasy.

About forty years after William Morris had given *The Earthly Paradise* to the world, Alfred Noyes published his *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, a group of nine stories centering about eminent Elizabethan writers. As we have already noted in his *Drake*, Noyes was intensely interested in the heroic traditions and dynamic personalities of this active period. In the *Mermaid*, the celebrated meeting-place of the Elizabethan immortals, Noyes revives for us the scene of such time-honored personages as Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe, Drayton, Raleigh, Green, Lodge, Lyly, Peele, Dekker, and others holding forth in the convivial manner of the times. Conversation flows as informally as the ale, relieved here and there by rollicking songs and short tales. Noyes' tavern is reminiscent of Chaucer's Tabard Inn, and the occasion of the story-telling has likewise some semblance of that amid which Chaucer's pilgrims tell their stories. Though they are entitled *tales*, some of them, like *A Coiner of Angels*, are primarily ballads. The most interesting of the tales is *Raleigh*, a pathetic narrative of that great Englishman's last days. Apart from their historical and literary interest, these tales are written in a catchy melody which continues to delight many readers.

In American literature, Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863-1873) and Whittier's *The Tent on the Beach* (1867) suffer by comparison with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Morris' *The Earthly Paradise*.

In the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, the group of story-tellers as-

semble at the Red Horse Inn, at Sudbury, twenty miles west of Boston. The inn was

A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,
Now somewhat fallen to decay,
With weather-stains upon the wall,
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,
And creaking and uneven floors,
And chimneys huge, and tiled and tall.
A region of repose it seems,
A place of slumber and of dreams,
Remote among the wooded hills.

There before the hospitable fire, a poet (T. W. Parsons), a student (H. W. Wales), a theologian (Professor Daniel Treadwell), a musician (Ole B. Bull), a Spanish Jew (Israel Edrehi), and a Sicilian (Professor Luigi Monti) sat with the innkeeper (Lyman Howe), telling stories till an early morning hour. The tales are connected, after the manner of Chaucer's and Morris', with preludes and interludes.

Longfellow went to various sources for his stories: to the Talmud, to the Scandinavian Eddas, and to medieval legend and modern history. *The Birds of Killingworth* is the most original of the series. It recounts the repentance of the people of Killingworth for having killed the birds and thereby invited calamity in the form of insects which devoured their crops. Other tales in this cycle, like *The Saga of King Olaf* and the popular *Paul Revere's Ride*, merit only passing mention.

Whittier's *The Tent on the Beach* is the least engaging of the tale cycles, whether judged from the standpoints of the narrative art or of the story element involved. In this instance

Three friends, the guests of summer time
Pitched their white tent where sea-winds blew.

These three friends are introduced in the prologue. The one is Fields, the publisher—

A lettered magnate, lording o'er
An ever-widening realm of books.

The second is Whittier himself—

... a dreamer born,
 Who, with a mission to fulfil,
 Had left the Muses' haunts to turn
 The crank of an opinion-mill,
 Making his rustic reed of song
 A weapon in the war with wrong.

The third is Taylor the traveler—

... whose Arab face was tanned
 By tropic sun and boreal frost,
 So travelled there was scarce a land
 Or people left him to exhaust.

These three friends gathered on Salisbury Beach to rest and to escape awhile

From cares that wear the life away,

And in the sea-waves drown the restless pack
 Of duties, claims, and needs that barked upon their track.

There along the shore

They talked of all things old and new,
 Read, slept, and dreamed as idlers do;
 And in the unquestioned freedom of the tent,
 Body and o'er-taxed mind to healthful ease unbent.

In the group of stories there are eight tales and three songs. The best stories in the collection are *The Wreck of Rivermouth* and *Kallundborg Church*. Some of these stories are mere fragments; and most of them are marred by a superimposed moral purpose.

QUESTIONS

1. By referring to examples of each type, contrast the epic, the metrical romance, and the metrical tale with respect to the supernatural elements contained in each.
2. Discuss Browning and Tennyson as tellers of tales. What methods are employed by each? Read in this connection Browning's *The Two Poets of Croisic*, *The Pied Piper of*

Hamelin, and Tennyson's *The Gardener's Daughter* and *The Defense of Lucknow*.

3. After reading one tale from each author, compare Chaucer and Morris as story-tellers. What points of strength and weakness do you observe in each, as judged by our present-day point of view?
4. Compare Wordsworth's *Michael* with Tennyson's *Dora* with respect to subject matter and verse form.
5. Consider the quality of realism as it is found in the tales mentioned in the preceding question.
6. What rules of short-story writing are observed in Masefield's *Dauber*? In Tennyson's *The Defense of Lucknow*?
7. May we regard Amy Lowell's *The Shadow* and Robert Frost's *The Death of the Hired Man* as tales? Discuss.
8. In what respects is Yeats' *Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea* especially appealing?
9. Read Robinson's *Isaac and Archibald* and Masefield's *The Widow in the Bye Street*. Are these more realistic than Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*—than Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*? Why?
10. Make a study of the use of humor in the metrical tale by consulting Burns' *Tam o' Shanter*, Holmes' *How the Old Horse Won the Bet*.

EXAMPLES

I. Single Tales:

English Tales:

Christopher Marlowe: *Hero and Leander*

William Shakespeare: *Venus and Adonis*

John Dryden: *The Cock and the Fox*

Robert Burns: *Tam o' Shanter*

William Wordsworth: *Michael*

Margaret

Laodamia

Leigh Hunt: *The Glove and the Lion*

Lord Byron: *The Prisoner of Chillon*

Alfred Tennyson: *The Defense of Lucknow*

Dora

Enoch Arden

The Gardener's Daughter
 Godiva
 Robert Browning: The Flight of the Duchess
 Pheidippides
 The Pied Piper of Hamelin
 The Statue and the Bust
 The Two Poets of Croisic
 Matthew Arnold: Balder Dead
 Sohrab and Rustum
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: Thalassius
 Eugene Lee-Hamilton: Ipissimus
 Robert Louis Stevenson: Heather Ale
 William Butler Yeats: Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea
 John Masefield: Dauber
 The Everlasting Mercy
 The Widow in the Bye Street
 Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: The Blind Rower
 The Brothers
 Harold Monro: Suburb
 Alfred Noyes: Forty Singing Seamen

American Tales:

Joseph Rodman Drake: The Culprit Fay
 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Evangeline
 Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Deacon's Masterpiece
 How the Old Horse Won the Bet
 Edgar Allan Poe: The Raven
 James Russell Lowell: Rhoecus
 Edwin Arlington Robinson: Isaac and Archibald
 Amy Lowell: The Shadow
 Robert Frost: The Code
 The Death of the Hired Man
 John Gneisenau Neihardt: The Song of Hugh Glass
 The Song of Three Friends

II. Groups of Tales:

English Groups:

John Gower: *Confessio Amantis*
 The Tale of Florent
 The Tale of Albinus and Rosemund

The Tale of Adrian and Bardus
The Tale of Rosiphelee
The Tale of Constantine and Silvester
Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales*
The Nun's Priest's Tale
The Pardoner's Tale
The Prioress's Tale
The Clerk's Tale
William Morris: *The Earthly Paradise*
The Lovers of Gudrun
The Story of Cupid and Psyche
Atalanta's Race
The Proud King
The Writing on the Image
Alfred Noyes: *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*
Raleigh
Big Ben

American Groups:

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: *Tales of a Wayside Inn*
The Birds of Killingworth
The Saga of King Olaf
The Legend Beautiful
King Robert of Sicily
The Bell of Atri
John Greenleaf Whittier: *The Tent on the Beach*
The Wreck of Rivermouth
Kallundborg Church
Abraham Davenport

CHAPTER VIII

THE LYRIC

THE lyric is a short, melodious poem in which the poet expresses directly his own thoughts and sentiments. Its special field is that of the emotions. The lyric is intensely personal. An expression of the world within, rather than of that without, is its particular concern and constitutes its principal charm. In this respect it stands out in sharp contrast to narrative poetry, which we have already considered.

NARRATIVE POETRY AND LYRIC POETRY

The prevailing characteristic of narrative poetry is its story. Lyric poetry is not always without a story element; but if it appears, it is only faintly discernible, supplying only so much narrative as is necessary to make clear the circumstance which gives rise to the emotion. Narrative poetry, on the other hand, is not without an emotional appeal; but the power which it has of arousing such feelings as hate, fear, and love arises from the story itself. The breathless excitement and brooding anxiety which narrative poetry instills is only indirectly a reflection of the emotion which actuated the author at the time of writing. It comes to the reader by an indirect route, or at a slant, and is then mostly a feeling stimulated not by the poet's own personal experiences but by the situations arising from projected relationships of characters and action. Because narrative poetry is concerned primarily with events in time sequence—with action, a greater number of personages are to be found in it than in lyric poetry, where the poet's chief concern is with but one individual, namely himself. The interaction of these characters, one upon another, in narrative poetry, and the experiences which they undergo at the poet's direction call, in turn, for greater length than is necessary for lyric poetry. Of the two forms, lyric

poetry is more compact, more direct, more intense, and emits more mental warmth.

Two terms are generally used to represent the impersonal nature of narrative poetry and the personal quality which is inherent in lyric poetry. The former is said to be *objective* and the latter *subjective*. The pronoun *I* is suggestive of the lyrical point of view; *he*, of the narrative. Lyric poetry, in effect, is not unlike the soliloquy in drama. We hear the poet, as it were, talking to himself. The soliloquy in drama is of course related to the action, and furthers the plot in some way, whereas in the lyric it is a self-revelation for its own sake—an end in itself. The contrast between narrative poetry and lyric poetry is clearly illustrated in Stevenson's *Heather Ale* and Milton's *On His Blindness*. In the first we are led to focus our attention upon the two dwarfish men, the father and son, who sacrificed their lives rather than reveal the secret of the drink. Stevenson himself does not protrude with his own personality. In the latter poem we are thinking of Milton's own state of blindness. We can gather something of the fortitude which leads him to accept his state, and of the heroism with which he goes forward.

Let us not, however, entertain for a moment the idea that there is a sharp line dividing narrative from lyric poetry. Numerous poems, like Burns' *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, have both the narrative and lyric elements in noticeable proportions. Whether we classify such a poem under one form or the other must depend upon the poet's chief motive in writing the poem. In the instance of the foregoing poem, despite the greater number of narrative lines, the piece is essentially a lyric poem, the poet being urged on by patriotic motives, as disclosed especially in the last three stanzas. In the strict sense there is a lyric note in every true poem. Though in narrative poetry our attention is drawn to the characters and action which the poet has created, still there shine through these same creations the light of the poet's own eyes and the fire of his own soul. The fingerprints, as it were, remain on the article of the poet's handling. To this extent all great narrative poetry is partly subjective; or there is, as we may say, an indirect subjectivity in every noteworthy narrative poem.

HISTORY

The Old English period of English literature, from the invasion of Hengist and Horsa in 449 to 1066, is principally an age of poetry. Several events combined in determining the nature of the poetry of this period: the Roman occupation from A.D. 43-410, the invasions of the Angles and Saxons in 480, the Danish invasion beginning in 787, and the coming of St. Augustine in 597. The last of these events was particularly important. With the missionary, St. Augustine, came Roman Christianity and the monasteries, which constituted the centers of learning for this exceptionally Christian era. As might be expected, most of the poetry was dominated by the Christian religion, much of it partaking of the nature of Biblical paraphrases and biographies of the Saints. In the main, the poems of this period are of a narrative and descriptive kind, and are intent upon showing a moral application. The lyric poetry of this period, like the main body of Old English poetry, is somber, rugged, and alliterative, and reflects alike the gloom and the resignation to Fate which typified the thinking of these people. Little of the poetry is purely lyrical. What we may term as such is chiefly elegiac in tone. Lament and aching Melancholy cast their shadows upon everything. Sad as they are, these poems contain a most admirable feature, namely a high seriousness which approaches true lyrical feelings.

The best and most original of these semi-lyrical pieces is *The Seafarer*, which reflects the irresistible longing of a seafaring man for the sea, despite its dangers and handicaps. Not entirely lacking in lyrical force are these lines on nature:

The woodlands are captured by blossoms, the hamlets grow fair,
Broad meadows are beautiful, earth again bursts into life,
And all stir the heart of the wanderer eager to journey,
So he meditates going afar on the pathway of tides.
The cuckoo, moreover, gives warning with sorrowful note,
Summer's harbinger sings, and forebodes to the heart bitter sorrow.
The nobleman comprehends not, the luxurious man,
What some must endure, who travel the farthest in exile.

(translation by LaMotte Iddings)

In another poem, *The Wanderer*, friendship is the keynote. After the death of his liege lord, a young thegn is forced to seek a

"shielder and protector" in strange lands. His home and friends are gone. The grief of this wandering exile is so feelingly portrayed that in all probability it reflects a personal experience:

Oft in the dark, alone before dawning,
 All to myself my sorrow I tell.
 No friend have I here, to whom I may open
 My heart's deep secret, my hidden spring of woe.
 Well do I know 'tis the way of the high-born,
 Fast in his heart to fetter his feelings,
 Lock his unhappiness in the hold of his mind.
 Spirit that sorrows withstandeth not destiny,
 Heart that complaineth plucketh no help.
 A haughty hero will hide his suffering,
 Manfully master misery's pang.

(translation by J. Duncan Spaeth)

In the end he finds consolation in the thought that human life is but for the moment:

Dead is their revelry, dust are the revellers!
 Some they have fallen on far fields of battle,
 Some have gone down in ships on the sea;
 Some were the prey of the prowling gray-wolf,
 Some by their loved ones were laid in the earth.
 The Lord of the living hath levelled their mansions,
 Silenced the sound of the singing and laughter.

(translation by J. Duncan Spaeth)

Deor's Lament, reputed to be the oldest lyric in the English language, voices the experiences of Deor, a professional poet, who was replaced by Heorrenda, a poet of the newer school. Although stricken with grief, Deor found solace in the thought that others likewise experienced, and in turn, conquered sorrow:

Yet that he overcame; so this may I.

In addition to these three poems, lyrical portions are also to be found in *The Ruined Burg*, *Lover's Message*, *A Love-Letter*, and *The Banished Wife's Complaint*.

The Middle English period extends, generally speaking, from the coming to England in 1066 of William of Normandy to the introduction of the printing press into England in 1476. French

culture and French literature, which the Norman conquest of 1066 introduced into England, dominated official and polite life for the next three centuries. French became the language of the ruling king and his barons. The influences, however, which determined the literature of this period are traceable both to England and to Europe.

The lyric of the period, especially, was influenced by the Troubadour poetry of Provence, a section in southern France. The Troubadour literature was concerned with the art of love; it was aristocratic and somewhat sensuous in nature. Leaving its birthplace in Poitou and Limousin, it spread to Catalonia and Italy, and still later over France and England. Eleanor of Guienne played an important part in the diffusion of this Provençal poetry. As the daughter of William of Poitou, she was subjected to its spell from her youth. Later, as queen of France for many years, and, finally, as wife to King Henry II of England, she was instrumental in extending the Provençal influence to France and England; for with her came the Provençal Troubadours, singers of the songs she loved from her childhood. Such lyrics of the period as the *Cuckoo Song* and *Alysoun* show evidences of this influence.

The religious spirit of the day also helped to determine the nature of the Middle English lyric. The church dominated the intellectual life of the period. What scholarship there was remained within the bounds of the church. The Latin formulae of service and the Latin hymns, which the clergy were constantly chanting, were destined to leave their impression upon certain lyrics of the time that have come down to us, noticeably upon *A Hymn to the Virgin*. In fact the religious and the troubadour influences combined when for several centuries French-speaking clerics occupied the highest seats in the abbeys.

The poetic energy of the period was chiefly expended upon romances of chivalrous and courtly love and upon allegories of one kind or another, to say nothing of the Saint's Legends, Beast Fables, and Roundelays. Although there are seven or eight manuscripts, dated before 1400, that contain lyrics in Latin, Anglo-French, and English, there are but a few in English of sufficient excellence to merit notice here.

The Cuckoo Song, written supposedly by John of Fornsete, a monk of Reading (c. 1226), is attractive for its elements both of

native folk song and of troubadour courtly love. So far as we know, it is the oldest secular poem in English. Its charm resides in its light, airy meter, as the first few lines will indicate:

Sumer is icumen in:
 Lhude ⁽¹⁾ sing cuccu ⁽²⁾!
 Groweth sed, and bloweth ⁽³⁾ med, ⁽⁴⁾
 And springth the wude nu. ⁽⁵⁾
 Sing cuccu!

Another exquisite love song, *Alysoun*, written around 1300, is characterized by a four-line refrain. The first stanza runs as follows:

Bytuene Mershe and Averil
 When spray biginneth to springe,
 The lutel foul hath hire wyl
 On hyre lud ⁽⁶⁾ to synge;
 Ich ⁽⁷⁾ libbe ⁽⁸⁾ in love-longinge
 For semlokest ⁽⁹⁾ of alle thynges,
 He ⁽¹⁰⁾ may me blisse bringe,
 Icham ⁽¹¹⁾ in hire baundoun ⁽¹²⁾.
 Refrain—
 An hendy hap ichabbee ⁽¹³⁾ yhent, ⁽¹⁴⁾
 Ichot from hevene it is me sent,
 From alle wymmen mi love is lent ⁽¹⁵⁾
 And lyht ⁽¹⁶⁾ on Alysoun.

A list of outstanding lyrics of the period would include at least five others. In *In Springtime* we have the age-old theme of love awakening with spring:

Lenten ⁽¹⁷⁾ ye come with love to tounne ⁽¹⁸⁾

A Hymn to the Virgin extols the Virgin Mary; while in *A Plea for Pity* a lover pleads with his lady love to yield and send him assurances of her love,

Sone ⁽¹⁹⁾, er ⁽²⁰⁾ thou me slo ⁽²¹⁾.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. loudly | 8. live | 15. departed |
| 2. cuckoo | 9. the most beautiful | 16. lighted |
| 3. blossometh | 10. she | 17. Lent, spring |
| 4. meadow | 11. I am | 18. to town |
| 5. now | 12. power | 19. soon |
| 6. language | 13. I have | 20. or |
| 7. I | 14. caught, received | 21. slay |

The lovers, as we see, were already dying for love in this early age. The poet praises the beauty of his mistress in *Blow, Northern Wind*; and in *Balade* Chaucer's lady far outshines the notable beauties of antiquity, as expressed in the refrain line:

My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.¹

A more minute study of the period would reveal such other lyrics as the anonymous *Carel*, Laurence Minot's eleven patriotic lyrics, Robert Henryson's *Robin and Makyne*, William Dunbar's *To a Lady*, and John Skelton's elegiac *Boke of Philipp Sparowe*.

With the Renaissance period, from 1476 to about 1616, we come to one of the most spontaneous and brilliant lyrical outbursts in English poetry. The very spirit of the Renaissance encouraged this. A revolt against Medieval authority and institutions set in. There was a lively curiosity about everything. Man himself, his moods and personality, became as never before an interesting subject for speculation. Men were turning to new interests; they freed themselves from old restraints and decided to think for themselves—hence the term *Renaissance*, meaning a *new birth*. The world, to them, became a new and marvelous place.

Several forces helped to bring about this change. In Italy, under the leadership of such men as Dante (1265-1321), Giotto (1276-1337), and Petrarch (1304-1374), the classics were being read with a new interest. They were read literally rather than allegorically. This new movement was introduced into England in the latter part of the fifteenth century. The Renaissance spirit was further aided by the coming of fugitive Greek scholars from Constantinople, by the discovery of America in 1492, and by Copernicus' theory of the earth's relationship to the solar system. The effective dissemination of the Renaissance spirit was made possible by the introduction of the printing press into England in 1476. There followed the distribution of such English translations of the classics as Lord Berner's *Froissart*, Phaer's *Aeneid*, North's *Plutarch*, and Chapman's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Though the Renaissance was over in Italy by 1540, in England it had then but fairly begun. In addition to the ancient classical civilization, England was further stimulated by the Hebrew literature. Interest in the Bible brought forth such English

¹ *bedim*.

translations as those of Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, and versions like the *Great Bible*, and the *Geneva Bible*.

In the beginning of the Renaissance period, Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503?-1542) introduced the Italian sonnet (a fourteen-line lyric) into England; and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, (1517-1547) invented the English form of sonnet. The lyrics of these men, together with forty by Grimold and ninety-five by anonymous authors, were published in 1557 by Richard Tottel. The volume, known as *Tottel's Miscellany*, is the first printed collection of lyrics in English. Thomas, Lord Vaux's *Of a Contented Mind*, George Gascoigne's *The Lullaby of a Lover*, and Edward De Vere's *If Women Could Be Fair* also come in the early part of this era.

Up to 1590 the pastoral (lyrics which are rural in spirit) was the favorite type of lyric. Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* and *Prothalamion*, Sidney's songs in *Arcadia*, and Drayton's *The Shepherd's Garland* are outstanding examples of this form. Something of the prevalency of the pastoral may be gleaned from John Bodenham's anthology of pastorals, entitled *England's Helicon* (1600). In this edition selections were contributed by Spenser, Sidney, Munday, Breton, Constable, Greene, Drayton, Lodge, and Peele. When the interest in the pastoral lyric began to wane, the sonnet superseded it, and for over a decade held sway in the realm of the lyric.

Although Wyatt and Surrey introduced the single sonnet into England, it was Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) that made popular the sonnet cycles or sequences on the theme of love. His model was Petrarch's sonnets to Laura. There followed such a flaring up of love sonnets the like of which England has not since witnessed. Of some twenty sonnet cycles that were written, only three hold any interest for us now, those of Sidney's just mentioned, Spenser's *Amoretti*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. In most of the love cycles of this period are to be found many a happily selected word and turn of phrase. Figures of speech are ingeniously, though often foolishly, wrought. The sentiment, if generally overdone, is now and then noble and beautiful.

In 1590 the English lyrists were singing in full chorus. Everybody was singing. Even barber shops added lutes to their regular equipment for the diversion of the customers. The spirit of youth and joy prevailed. Little oppressed with the cares of life, they

THE LYRIC

sang in an unrestrained, convivial manner, taking a youthful delight in variety and experimentation in verse. Men in all walks of life—pamphleteers, martyrs, churchmen, scholars, statesmen—wrote out of sheer good feeling. There was little they did not touch upon. The sweep of their themes included love, vice, religion, nature, death, patriotism. Whatever was written was executed vigorously and imaginatively. So versatile were they in their experiments that by the end of the period almost all the important types of verse had been introduced.

To comment, even in a cursory way, upon the leading individual lyrics of the period would be impossible in this panoramic treatment. John Lyly, George Peel, Robert Greene, William Shakespeare, and John Fletcher had included songs of superb artistry in their dramas. *Who is Silvia, Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun*, and *Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies* by Shakespeare are too well known to need comment. Of an entirely different order are Sir Edward Dyer's philosophical *My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is*, Michael Drayton's spirited *Agincourt*, and Francis Beaumont's epitaph *On the Tombs in Westminster Abbey*. Shakespeare must have complimented Marlowe for his exquisite pastoral lyric, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*, which opens with this verbal music:

Come live with me, and be my love;
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

When Ben Jonson so desired, he could also be as deft as his brother writers. His best lyrics are notable for their high finish and completeness; they are felicitous in technique, perfect in diction, and as light at times as the tread of an elf. *Song to Celia*, *Simplex Mundiis*, and *Hymn to Diana* are, next to Shakespeare's songs, the best known among the Elizabethan lyrics.

Historically, the seventeenth century divides itself into three periods: the turbulent reigns of James I and Charles I (1603-1646), the Puritan control (1646-1658), and the Restoration and reign of the Stuarts (1660-1702). This series of political upheavals evoked deep reflection on the part of the people. They became more serious than their Elizabethan predecessors. Questions of personal and civil rights and of religious duty were constantly

arising. There was need for discussion and action. Naturally enough, this state of affairs affected the writers of the century. The spontaneity which characterized the lyrists of the preceding period was gradually giving way to more studied and epigrammatic methods. In a sense, the seventeenth century poets were a more formally trained group; they were more precise. Herrick's lyrics, though of a high order, strike us as so many carved gems, cut sharply and delicately by a fine instrument. This same desire for perfection led in turn to experiments in meter and stanzaic arrangement, the best known example being that of George Herbert's *Easter Wings*, where the stanzas are arranged in the likeness of a pair of wings. Those who are interested in this phase of seventeenth century verse will find further examples of fanciful arrangements in the poems of Francis Quarles.

Spenser, Jonson, and Donne all had their followers in the seventeenth century. The most notable emulator of Spenser was Milton. Among the "Sons of Ben" Jonson are chiefly Herrick, Carew, and Waller. Donne is the acknowledged leader of the so-called "Metaphysical" lyrists, to which school belonged Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Carew, Lovelace, Crashaw, and Cowley. Donne is an important figure. His is a new as well as a direct and vigorous note. Among his immediate imitators are Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan. Something of Donne's conceits and intellectual force may easily be discerned in their poetry. These three followers of Donne are not only the greatest devotional poets of the period, but among the few in all English literature who could write religious lyrics without descending to sentimentality and a flat didacticism. This fact is all the more remarkable when we remember that these poets were writing at a time when the courts of James I and Charles I were steeped in rout and revelry.

From a literary point of view, the century may be divided into two parts. The first sixty years might very suggestively be called the Cavalier and Puritan period, after the names of the two opposing factions in the kingdom. From such Cavalier lyrists as Wither, Carew, Herrick, Suckling, and Lovelace came, in the main, a light and gay form of lyric. It is in such selections as Wither's *Shall I, Wasting in Despair*, Herrick's *To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time*, and Suckling's *Why So Pale and Wan* that we begin to hear decided notes of *Vers de Société*. The

Puritans or "Roundheads," as they were called, wrote in a soberer, more religious vein. With the names of John Milton and Andrew Marvell we invariably associate such lyrics as *Lycidas* and *An Horatian Ode* rather than erotic ditties to some lady love. In the second literary period of the century, commonly called the Restoration, there is a dearth of outstanding lyric poets. What lyric poetry appeared was the expression of eloquence rather than of feeling. It inclined toward personal, brutal satire. Cowley and Dryden are among the few noteworthy lyrists of which this time (1660-1702) can boast. The farther the century separated itself from the great day of Shakespeare, the dimmer shone the lyrical fire. Cowley's *The Wish* and Dryden's *Alexander's Feast; or The Power of Music* come as a last echo of the exquisite song which had ushered in the first half of this century.

The eighteenth century (1700-1798) is known as the Period of Classicism. Its artists imitated the works of ancient Greece and Rome. In literature the term Neo-Classicism ("New" Classicism) is often applied to the literary product of this century in so far as the classical aspects of this age were unlike those of any preceding one, principally dissimilar to those which characterized the Elizabethan period. Side by side with an imitation of the classics went also a critical attitude of mind. Reason rather than feeling was esteemed. The insistence was upon orderliness, good sense, moderation, and clearness. Enthusiasm and imagination, so much a part of the Renaissance, were disapproved. Anything that partook of freakishness and emotionalism was especially in bad taste. A certain complacency set in which made the main current of writers almost oblivious to any claims of the spirit or to the yearnings of the intuitions.

This stressing of the mind, rather than of the heart, had a correspondingly restricting effect upon poetry. The taste of the times called for order and lucidity in art. The subject matter of poetry was to be kept within certain prescribed limits. The experiences which were commonly associated with cultivated men of society and with those of city life in general were to be presented clearly and, above all, brilliantly. Nature, for these writers, had no special charm; the life in the country and of the poor in cities was beneath their consideration—almost contemptible. This adherence to standards inevitably brought on conventionality and

artificiality. Lyrical flights of any height were therefore unlikely. This restriction of theme was also accompanied by limitations in verse form. The heroic couplet became the popular mold. The usual couplet consisted of end-stopped, iambic pentameter lines, like the following:

And trust me, dear, good humor can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.

Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*

Each couplet was complete in itself, and served admirably for the expression of a neat, clean-cut bit of common sense or satire. This form, introduced by Waller, but perfected and popularized by Pope, was an enemy to the lyric. We have already noted that the latter part of the seventeenth century bequeathed no great lyrical spirit to the poets that were to follow. Add to this condition the formality, cynicism, and coldly religious sentiments of the opening years of the eighteenth century, and we have little to expect in lyric poetry.

The first forty years of the century we may designate as the Age of Pope—from the death of Dryden in 1700 to the publication of Thomas Gray's odes in 1742. Since the poetry of these years was largely satiric and didactic in nature, a merely clever and correct verse, we are not surprised to find but a few, if any, superb lyrics. Pope himself was too splenetic and ironic to write noteworthy lyrics, despite his delicate fancy and laudable metrical form. John Gay wrote a number of lyric songs for his famous *Beggar's Opera* and for *Acis and Galatea*; of these lyrics, *Youth's the Season* and *Galatea* are the most striking. Though the Age of Pope was so pronouncedly classical, a note of protest can early be detected in (James Thomson's *The Seasons*. The sympathetic descriptions of nature and the attention given to the lowly swain are forerunners of the later Romantic period.) Henry Carey's *Sally in Our Alley* is still a favorite. Rather strange it seems that in this age some excellent hymns should have been written. Isaac Watts, a non-conformist minister, wrote a number, among them *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*, *A Cradle Hymn*, and *Am I a Soldier of the Cross*. Joseph Addison's *The Spacious Firmament on High*, another famous hymn, still appears in our hymnals.

The latter part of the eighteenth century literature, appro-

propiately called the Age of Johnson, extending from 1742 to the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798, was still, to a large extent, dominated by Pope. The great portion of the poetry remained classical in tone. However, new tastes and sentiments more and more asserted themselves, especially noteworthy being the humanitarian and democratic leanings in the poems of Gray, Cowper, and Burns. (The points of view that were to typify the later Romantic period, began to appear. With Gray and Collins lyrical poetry was again very definitely revived. Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is one of the most astounding creations. Its unity of atmosphere is remarkable; everything in the poem carries out the mild melancholy, the quiet, forlorn feeling of a rural churchyard. Closely akin to the foregoing poem of Gray are the allusions to nature in the twilight setting which permeates Collins' *Ode to Evening*.) His *Ode* and *Dirge in Cymbeline* are also delicately rendered. Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* laments the passing of "Sweet Auburn," a village destroyed in order to extend the bounds of a wealthy landowner's landscape and to furnish more space for his sports. William Collins and William Cowper were both victims of insanity, brought on by melancholy and depression. Something of this unhappy mood is in Cowper's *To Mary* and especially in *The Castaway*. Although Cowper's mother had been dead for fifty years, he wrote his best known lyric, *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture*, with a strength and feeling that might have characterized a poem composed within a day or two of her death. With William Blake we are on the very threshold of a new period. His *Songs of Innocence* are imaginative lyrics of exceptional beauty and appeal. He is our first supreme childhood lyricist. *Piping down the Valleys Wide*, *Cradle Song*, and *The Tiger* are perennially revived. The master lyric poet of the eighteenth century is, however, Robert Burns. Reared in an atmosphere of old lays and ballads, he created and re-created such a flood of song as English literature has not seen in any other poet. His broad humanity and kindly sympathetic nature make us love him. Few poets can use the weapons of scorn and indignation so graciously. For melodious variations, sincerity, and deftness of touch there are few his equal. We cannot read *To a Mouse* and *To a Mountain Daisy* without admiring his genial regard for lowly life. His

numerous songs have won for him the enviable distinction of being the world's greatest song-writer. Who does not respond to his *My Nanie, O; Green Grow the Rashes, O; Auld Lang Syne; Ae Fond Kiss; and Highland Mary?*

The hymn-writing that was begun in the Age of Pope was continued in the Age of Johnson. Some of the most enduring ones are Charles Wesley's *Jesus, Lover of my Soul*; John Newton's *The Lord's Day*; Edward Perronet's *Coronation*; William Cowper's *Walking with God*; John Fawcett's *Blest be the Tie that Binds*; and Augustus M. Toplady's *Rock of Ages*.

The nineteenth century period in English literature, extending from 1798 to about the death of Tennyson in 1892, was a remarkable century in many ways. Ideas of democracy were slowly creeping in. Never before did science make such forward strides. Inventions both startled and delighted the Englishman. The railroad, steamboat, telegraph, electric lights, telephone, and phonograph—all had a part in revolutionizing the mode of life and thought in this century. Machinery brought industry and, in turn, industrial communities. Business men wielded the greatest power. For the first time in English life the individual leader was a specialist in some one field.

Because of this ascendancy of science and business, the arts suffered. To compensate for this loss, however, the number of people reading books increased rapidly. In 1814 over five hundred books were published in England; by the end of the century almost twenty times that number were coming from the press. Though such a poet as Pope had previously made a fortune on his works, now the publication of books became more generally profitable. With a larger reading public the need for diversification in literature became more urgent. At no previous time was there used so great a variety of verse-forms and stanza forms. Every type of poetry was written in this versatile age. Often the same poet experimented in every phase of narrative, lyrical, and dramatic poetry.

This widening of the human horizon in every direction was destined to affect lyric poetry. In the first forty years of this period, to about 1832 (the death of Scott), known as the Age of Wordsworth or the Romantic Age, the bounds of subject matter were extended to include more of nature, animals, the past, and the supernatural. The conventional couplet and diction of the

preceding century were discarded. Many forms were revived, such as the sonnet and *Vers de Société*. All in all, the romantic interests dominated lyric composition. By *romantic* we mean that attitude toward life which is tinged by a certain feeling of remoteness and of strangeness. (Romanticism is swayed by imaginative and emotional beauty and by a mindfulness of the mystery of life and its endless significations.) The Romantic mind delights to revert to the past in all its dim grandeur and suggestiveness. Not only in subject matter but also in form was the Romantic influence felt. Wordsworth, for example, sought to use the "very language of men," and Coleridge adopted an irregular line movement in *Christabel*.

This new emphasis upon the imagination and the emotions as forces in poetic creations led of course to excesses; but English literature has been distinctively enriched by the work of these inquirers into the labyrinthine recesses of personality. Wordsworth, by the announcement of his poetical creed in *Lyrical Ballads*, set into motion the major forces of the Romantic Age. Not only did he reveal the beauties of nature, but likewise the strength and encouragement that human beings may derive from communion with her. Both *The Solitary Reaper* and *I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud* show Wordsworth's power in transmuting an emotion, aroused by simple scenes, into a substantial poetic product. One of the most significant of his lyrical pieces is his poetic autobiography, *The Prelude*. Then, too, his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, *Ode to Duty*, and *The World Is Too Much With Us* are as renowned in theme as they are symphonic in verse structure.

There are other poets of the Romantic period whom we shall merely mention. Sir Walter Scott, whose lyrics lack the truest lyrical fervor, wrote nevertheless such meritorious pieces as *Proud Maisie*, *Coronach*, *Hunting Song*, and *Bonny Dundee*. Samuel T. Coleridge achieved memorable effects in his spirited *France: an Ode*. The romanticist's interest in liberty is reflected in this lyric. Charles Lamb, while primarily an essayist, achieved some distinction in his two poems, *Hester* and *The Old Familiar Faces*. In some of his selections of society verse, and especially in *Rose Aylmer*, Walter Savage Landor shows splendid taste and finish. Thomas Campbell, the prim Scotchman, is remembered for one stirring war-song, *Ye Mariners of England*.

Thomas Hood, though a punster of the first order, laid aside his lighter vein when he wrote the gripping lyrics, *The Song of the Shirt* and *The Bridge of Sighs*. The jovial Irishman, Thomas Moore, though beset with more than his share of limitations as a lyricist, has written two songs that have promise of continued favor, *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls* and *The Last Rose of Summer*.

In the Romantic Age there are three names that are often associated: Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The proud, sensitive, strong-willed Lord Byron, hater of cant and bigotry, and an ardent lover of freedom, shocked his own day into recognizing him. Though a poser, he was yet sincere at heart. Everything about him seemed contradictory; still he fascinated his generation. His poetic strokes are almost too large and too severe for lyrical music. He was well nigh too dramatic and too self-centered to play the softer lyrical strains; but what lover of poetry even now does not read *When We Two Parted*, *She Walks in Beauty*, *Fare Thee Well*, and *So, We'll Go No More a Roving*? The last of these has the very element of word-witchery in it:

So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

Percy Bysshe Shelley is the most unworldly and intensely lyrical of English poets. He takes us farthest from the realm of streets and houses. As a reformer he calls for our censure—he was impetuous and impractical; but as a lyricist some of his work is all but perfect. His poems in general are filled with a haunting beauty at once passionate and importunate. Austere music of a

variety where sounds of words and meaning blend into one exquisite melody is to be found in such selections as *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To Night*, *Indian Serenade*, and *To a Skylark*. These four noble stanzas conclude the last of these poems:

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

The third of the triumvirate, John Keats, belongs more to the earth. The world, to him, is alive with interest. Colors, scents, and sounds of nature bring him intense joy and lead him to his poetic outbursts. Though he sees freshness and beauty, he is keenly aware of the fragility of it all. A knowledge of Keats' life makes us see in him an heroic manliness. In his

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone;
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, commonly known as the Victorian Era or the Age of Tennyson English poetry felt the impetus of a prevailing moral earnestness. It is not surprising to find that much of this poetry is concerned with the ordering of conduct. There was throughout the period a strong inclination to insist upon fact. Reason was emphasized. Though German Biblical criticism and various scientific treatises like Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 1859, precipitated spiritual unrest and frequently thrust Tennyson, Clough, Arnold, and others into a maze of doubt, all in all there prevailed throughout this half century a spirit of optimism, founded chiefly upon the scientific progress and material prosperity of the age. As in the Romantic era, the poetry of the Victorian years continued to utilize a diversity of subjects. Almost every variety of form was also employed. The poets enjoyed a freedom even beyond that of the Romantic writers.

As early as 1833 John Keble inaugurated what was later called the Oxford (or Tractarian) Movement, which sought to free the church from politics, emphasizing the traditional and ceremonial customs of the church. From one of the chief supporters of this movement, John Henry Newman, came a well-known hymn, *The Pillar of the Cloud*, more familiarly known as *Lead, Kindly Light*.

The two greatest poets in the Victorian Age were Tennyson and Browning. These men afford us striking contrasts. Tennyson's excellencies as an artist remain unchallenged. He is often too ornate and didactic, it is true; but for sheer word music we are reminded much of Shelley. In such of Tennyson's lyrics as *Break, Break, Break*; *The Bugle Song*; *Tears, Idle Tears*; and *Crossing*

the Bar we are entranced by supreme melody. Alike impressive are the pathos of *Rizpah* and the lyrics in *Maud*; while in *Ulysses* and *In Memoriam* there remains an unmistakable quality of distinction which must become apparent to all who read them sympathetically. Quite different are the lyrics of the unconventional and robust Browning. If we accept the rather contradictory term, *dramatic lyric*, as falling within the pale of lyricism, in Browning we shall find a large range of challenging pieces, unlike any others in the whole range of English poetry. Essentially lyrical are *Cavalier Tunes*, the songs from *Pippa Passes*, *Evelyn Hope*, and *Home Thoughts from Abroad*. The madness of the lover in *Porphyria's Lover*, the affective commingling of lyricism and drama in *In a Gondola*, the beautiful contrast between the transientness of the Roman Campagna and the eternity of love in *Love Among the Ruins*, and the undaunted spirit in *Prospice*—all demonstrate Browning's skill as a lyric craftsman. Browning's wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, while not of the same literary stature as her husband, has admirably injected her sincere and exquisite feeling into such lyrics as *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, *Cowper's Grave*, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, and *A Child's Grave at Florence*.

Arthur Hugh Clough and Matthew Arnold, because of their note of doubt, are often considered together. Clough's rugged courage in the face of spiritual confusion is portrayed in his two best lyrics: *Qua Cursum Ventus* and *Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth*. About Arnold there is an atmosphere of culture, dignity, and restraint. Even in his most forlorn *Dover Beach* there is a sense of Grecian stoicism. For his best lyrical utterances we must turn, however, to such other poems as *Requiescat*, *Rugby Chapel*, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, *Thyrsis*, *A Wish*, and *Self-Dependence*.

In addition to the Oxford Movement, and allied to it, there was in this same period another and more significant group activity, namely that of the pre-Raphaelites. This group of young men desired to bring back something of the same feeling and sincerity that characterized the Italian painters before Raphael. Though primarily concerned with painting, pre-Raphaelitism was a determining influence in the poetry written by its members. This point of view in art symbolized for them a declaration of their independence in art. The leader of the Brotherhood, in

poetry, was Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Of the entire group he is the most lyrical. *The Blessed Damozel* is a significant example of the pre-Raphaelite mood and art. The allegorical and symbolic machinery, in which these skilled artists gloried, is here employed with cryptic profusion:

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the golden bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

.
From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the world. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

.
'When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

'We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod.
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayers sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

'We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.'

The lyrics of his sister, Christina Rossetti, are noticeably religious in nature. *We Buried Her Among the Flowers*; *When I am Dead, My Dearest*; and *The Summer Is Ended*. William Morris, a designer and handicraft artist, as well as popularizer of the much used *Morris Chair*, wrote poetry more as an avocation. Despite his multifarious artistic activities, he found time to write, among other poems, *The Earthly Paradise*, a series of narratives, in which he inserted lyrics for the various months of the year. Of this group the *Prologue*, *Ogier the Dane*, and *In the White-flowered Hawthorne Brake* stand out as particularly praiseworthy. Better known, however, are *In Prison* and the remonstrative *The Day Is Coming*.

Several other poets, who bring the period to a close, must be recognized here. George Meredith's *The Lark Ascending*, *Song*, *Requiem*, and *Marian* are notable for their imagery and concord of beautiful sounds. This is especially true of *The Lark Ascending*, where the consecutiveness of descriptive phrases is something marvelous to behold:

As up he wings the spiral stair,
A song of light, and pierces air
With fountain ardor, fountain play,
To reach the shining tops of day,
And drink in everything discerned
An ecstasy to music turned,
Impelled by what his happy bill
Disperses; drinking, showering still,

Unthinking save that he may give
His voice the outlet, there to live
Renewed in endless notes of glee,
So thirsty of his voice is he,
For all to hear and all to know
That he is joy, awake, aglow,
The tumult of the heart to hear
Through pureness filtered crystal-clear,
And know the pleasure sprinkled bright
By simple singing of delight,
Shrill, irreflective, unrestrained,
Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustained
Without a break, without a fall,
Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical,
Perennial, quavering up the chord
Like myriad dews of sunny sward
That trembling into fulness shine,
And sparkle dropping argentine;
Such wooing as the ear receives,
From zephyr caught in choric leaves
Of aspens when their chattering net
Is flushed to white with shivers wet;
And such the water-spirit's chime
On mountain heights in morning's prime,
Too freshly sweet to seem excess,
Too animate to need a stress.

Algernon Swinburne is among those poets who charm us not so much by *what* they say as by *how* they say it. There are times when we prefer to listen to word music rather than to thought-beladen lines. Then it is that we ought to turn to *A Song in Time of Order*, *A Match*, *The Garden of Prosperine*, *Rococo*, *A Child's Laughter*, and part I of *Étude Réaliste*. In the province of French Forms, Swinburne has likewise established an enviable reputation. To such a master of lyric forms even the intricate Sestina yielded its secrets. In the Victorian Age many other poets used the French Forms, among them Praed, Calverly, Dobson, Lang, Gosse, and Henley.

While a strain of pessimism and despair permeates the melody of James Thomson's *A Requiem*, his song assumes a happier

mood in *Sunday at Hampstead*. William Ernest Henley challenges our admiration for his brave and dauntless spirit. In *Invictus* he faces the "fell clutch of circumstance" without a wince. How this manly soul wishes to die is portrayed in *The Passing*. Themes of fate, death, and love abound in his lyrics. For Robert Louis Stevenson we have an affection which is heightened by the fact that in 1887 he sought the shores of Saranac Lake in search of health. Then we esteem him for his admirable childhood lyrics in *A Child's Garden of Verses* and for the epitaph, *Requiem*:

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

The general revolt which marks the beginning of the Modern period in English literature, 1892-, was already noticeable in the closing years of the preceding Victorian Age. Material prosperity did not make for tranquillity; instead, increasing discontent was perceived on every hand. The desire was not for a sane and sensible mode of living so much as for an intense, exciting life. The serenity of England's millions was not at all helped by the agitation for home rule in Ireland, or by the poverty of England's "submerged tenth." The World War brought in its wake debts, disrupted industrial conditions, and a restlessness that bordered upon rebellion. Everywhere there was a resentment of authority.

This revolt was felt in literature. More than ever before the poets experimented with new subjects and with new literary forms. The poetic decorations of the Victorian Age were dropped for a simple and more direct form of expression. Certain of the imaginative and emotional qualities were likewise discarded; in their place arose a stricter adherence to fact and logic. Spontaneity gave place to a studied "art-for-art's-sake" procedure. Instead of the strong moral tone of Tennyson, Arnold, Morris, and others, there developed a movement which regarded the highest form

of art as strictly unmoral. Because of the prevailing restlessness in literature, cults and movements arose by the score, each with some pet idea to sponsor. We have such groups as Naturalists, Symbolists, Romanticists, and Mystics. A somewhat cynical attitude toward old ideals and restraints characterize most of them.

Of the large number of lyric poets that belong to this Modern period we have place for but a few of the outstanding ones. Thomas Hardy, though often regarded as one of the Victorians, may as conveniently be grouped among the moderns. Notes of misgiving and of despair are heard in much of his finer poetry, as in *The Last Leaf* and *Let Me Enjoy*. He can go from the light, melodious *First or Last* to the gravely reflective *The Coming of the End*. For tender pathos we turn to *The Blinded Bird* and *The Reminder*. The last of these merits quoting:

While I watch the Christmas blaze
Paint the room with ruddy rays,
Something makes my vision glide
To the frosty scene outside.

There, to reach a rotting berry,
Toils a thrush,—constrained to very
Dregs of food by sharp distress,
Taking such with thankfulness.

Why, O starving bird, when I
One day's joy would justify,
And put misery out of view,
Do you make me notice you!

In contrast to the somberness of Hardy we have the cheer and hope of Robert Bridges, the late Poet-Laureate of England. For Bridges, life had enough zest to induce him to write as follows:

The idle life I lead
Is like a pleasant sleep,
Wherein I rest and heed
The dreams that by me sweep.

And still of all my dreams
In turn so swiftly past,
Each in its fancy seems
A nobler than the last.

And every eve I say,
 Noting my step in bliss,
 That I have known no day
 In all my life like this.

While Bridges frequently mars his verse by unmusical lines, he achieves some happy effects in the nature lyric, *The Evening Darkens Over*, and in the Swinburne-like *Pater Filio*. There is an attractive unaffectedness about such other pieces as *I Will Not Let Thee Go*, *London Snow*, and *My Delight and Thy Delight*. The reputation of A. E. Housman centers about *A Shropshire Lad*. His appeal lies in the simple language and the unadorned ideas which he employs. Permeating the bulk of his poetry there is also a spirited meter, as in *Reveille*, coupled with an active pessimism. Often, as in *As I Gird On For Fighting*, there is a mild and not unpleasant sarcasm. Another common theme with Housman is the futility of striving, as exemplified in *Think No More, Lad*. He delights, too, in unexpected associations of ideas, as in

Lie down, lie down, young yeoman:
 What use to rise and rise?
 Rise man a thousand mornings
 Yet down at last he lies,
 And then the man is wise.

Rudyard Kipling is well known as the poet of the widespread British Empire, an exponent of the idea of British expansion and of the basic kinship of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. He is patriotic and realistic; he is original and, to a large extent, a superb artist in technique. Though imperialistic, he yet sounded that strong note of warning after the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, in the poem entitled *Recessional*. William Butler Yeats, a senator of the Irish Free State since 1922 and winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 1923, believes with Keats that "beauty is truth, truth beauty." He is one in whom faith and imagination are keenly alive. About all his poetry there is a halo of mysticism, as in *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. Just as fascinating are *The Song of the Faeries*, *The Wild Swans at Coole*, and the reflective lyric, *When You Are Old*. John Masefield succeeded Robert Bridges as Poet-Laureate of England in 1930.

The early wanderings of John Masefield brought him to New York in 1895. Later as a lecturer he visited the United States again in 1916 and in 1918. Although he is best known as a writer of narrative poetry, he has achieved success as a lyricist as well. In *A Consecration* Masefield's sympathy for the humble and the oppressed is sharply stated:

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,

Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth!

To a large extent he did make England's lower class life the theme of his poetry. His love for the sea is everywhere apparent, especially in such lyrics as *Sea-Fever* and *Spanish-Water*. With all his ability at representing rough men and hard aspects of life, he can, if he chooses, inject a delicate strain of beauty in such poems as *On Growing Old* and *The West Wind*.

CHARACTERISTICS

The word *lyric* is derived from the Greek word *lyrikos*, meaning *song-like*. It referred originally to a song that was sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. Throughout its long and interesting history the lyric has retained something of this musical movement, metrically or verbally, or both. In every successful lyric we invariably look for a certain mystical and pleasing cadence.

The first and foremost quality of the lyric is its subjectivity—its intense personality. In a general way we designate as lyrical all poetry which has this subjective quality. It is essential that behind so short a poem as the lyric there move a mind of strong individuality, capable of imprinting itself indelibly upon the reader as he reads the lines. The lyric is the essay mood in poetry. As in the familiar essay, the personal point of view distinguishes the lyrical poem. In a stricter sense, the lyric is the poet's own dramatic monologue, representing his personal dramatic moments. This is not to say that a lyric must always be autobiographical. This is most certainly not the case. A poet often succeeds in projecting himself into the person and situation of another. He is gifted with an artistic sympathy which enables him to feel and speak as another might reasonably be expected

to feel and speak in the same situation. Just when, however, he is drawing upon his own personal experiences in doing this we are in most instances unable to say.

The second outstanding characteristic in the lyric is its emotion. Frigidity is the avowed enemy of lyricism. There must be a certain amount of excitement of a natural and artistic kind. With the lyric it is *I feel* rather than *I think*. If the emotion is perfectly presented, it will join with verse form and melody to effect a poem of harmony and power. The result will be a depth of sentiment greater than that conveyed by the mere words themselves. In life, emotional experiences vary greatly in kind and intensity. Since art demands that every form of emotion find its proper form, many types of lyrics have sprung into being, such as sonnets, elegies, and society verse.

The lyric is happiest when it deals with a single emotion. The reader may have had the identical feeling which the poet voices, in which case it becomes for the reader a very personal matter. Or the reader may, by extending his sympathy, also understand the poet's sentiment and thus appreciate his lines. If the emotion is properly felt, it results in character; for upon the soul there is then cast a refining, ennobling influence. It guides the intellect into a selection of wise and beautiful emotional experiences for the soul.

The emotional experience which is presented in the lyric may or may not subside with the end of the poem. Burns' *My Nanie*, *O* and Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud* both bring the emotion to a close; but in Shelley's *Indian Serenade* and Hardy's *Faint-heart in a Railway Train* and *The Sigh* the emotion is not yet exhausted when the last line of the poem is reached.

A lyric poem may vary in length according to the number of the poetic experiences which the poet sees fit to combine into one co-ordinate whole. Whether the poet uses one or more of these units depends upon the nature of the emotion which he is reflecting. If the passion is prolonged and varied, the poem will be longer than where it is simple and intense. "Passion, when at white heat," asserts Watts-Dunton, "is never voluble, is scarcely even articulate." In the longer lyric the movement alternates between moments of high feeling and those of comparative repose, as in Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*. A long lyric, in this sense, is merely a sequence of shorter ones. In general,

however, the lyric is shorter than either narrative or dramatic types of poetry.

Because of its simplicity in melody and sentiment, the lyric enjoys a greater probability of permanence than either narrative or dramatic poetry. The lyric delights in giving voice to the elemental and undiluted sentiments in life. It employs a minimum of description and narration. With argument it has nothing to do. The outline of the situation is sufficient for it. The lyrical element is of course present in drama, whenever the feelings reach out for musical expression; but the multifarious objective materials of drama are foreign to the lyric. Likewise toward satire and moralizing the lyric is inhospitable. The weaving in of a moral or of a thread of ridicule is repulsive to pure lyricism; for in this instance the mood is sacrificed to some ulterior purpose. The most felicitous results are obtained when the pure poetic energy is dissociated from other energies such as a desire to reform, to teach, to reprove, or to scorn.

To the range of lyric themes there is no limit, except it be the bound of human emotion itself. Wit, humor, exultation, folly, fancy, devotion, love, sorrow, death, aspiration, communion with God, fear, patriotism, despair, lamentation—all come within the legitimate province of the lyric. Though there may be relatively only a few subjects, there are yet an infinite variety of moods, each of which may serve as a theme for a lyric. Since the lyrical temperament is concerned with these manifold and ever-changing moods of man, the interest in lyric poetry will continue with every year and generation. Technically speaking, in a truly great lyric we look for a poem beautified with consummate, though secreted art. We await the revelation of a compelling personality. A desire for justice, a sense of architectural proportions, and a constancy of poetic energy are also qualities which are found in a lyric of commanding power. There must be a perfect fusion of thought and feeling, a nice balance between words and rhythmic movement, a pleasing variety within the limits of the chosen metrical pattern. About the lyric there should be a haunting beauty which evades our analysis but captivates our fancies and persists in our memories. Here, we must feel, are the best language and the finest melody for the highest possible purpose.

In the true lyric poet we look for an intuitive knowledge of the human heart and a desire to portray it. He must be favored

with a broad and active sympathy; for only in so far as he touches a wide range of significant material can he appeal to mankind in general. Strictly speaking, his audience is restricted to those who sympathize with him and are attracted to momentary—sometimes lifelong association with him.

CLASSES

No satisfactory classification of lyric poetry has ever been devised. The difficulty involved becomes at once apparent when we consider the multiplicity of subjects and forms which lyric poetry may employ. Classification according to either subject matter or verse structure is unsatisfactory. The customary classification, therefore, is based upon both of these. Certain names have been used to designate particular types of lyrics from the very earliest times, such as sonnet, elegy, ode, and song. These it is necessary to retain. In order to include the largest number of lyrics possible in our survey, the term *General Lyric* has been improvised to incorporate such examples as have been naturally excluded from the other classes.

QUESTIONS

1. Form your own definition of a lyric.
2. Explain what is meant by the following definition of lyric poetry: "The quintessence of momentary mood garnered into words."
3. How do you account for the lyric outburst in the Elizabethan Age?
4. After reading five lyrics from each literary period, contrast the themes in the lyric poetry of the Elizabethan Age with those of the Romantic Age.
5. Discuss the reasonableness of the assertion that "the poet reaches lyrical perfection only when he touches a chord that sets all our hearts vibrating."
6. What great lyrical elements are to be found in Psalms 8, 19, 42, 103, and 121 in the Bible?
7. In some anthology such as Houston and Smith's *Types of World Literature* read the following Greek and Latin lyrics in translation:

Anacreon: *The Grasshopper*
The Swallow
A Lover's Sigh

Catullus: *Love Is all*
The Dead Sparrow
Catullus at His Brother's Grave
Nuptial Song

Horace: *To Pyrrha*
To Sally
In Praise of Country Life

Do these differ in any respects from modern English or American lyrics?

8. Contrast as lyrics, Burns' *Highland Mary* with Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*.
9. What portions of Browning's *In a Gondola* are lyrical? Of Burns' *A Cotter's Saturday Night*?
10. The purpose of poetry, says John Drinkwater, is "to produce the virile spiritual activity that we call aesthetic delight." Why is this particularly true of lyric poetry?
11. Chapters 38, 39, 40, and 41 of *Job* have what claims to classification as great lyrics?
12. Comment upon the *underlined* word in William Ernest Henley's definition of a lyric as "a single emotion *temperamentally* expressed in the terms of poetry."
13. Contrast the following pairs of poems. Which one in each case is the more truly lyrical and why?
 - (a) Beaumont: *Lines on the Tombs in Westminster Abbey*
 Jonson: *Hymn to Diana*
 - (b) Burns: *Ae Fond Kiss*
 Wordsworth: *London, 1802*
 - (c) Hood: *The Song of the Shirt*
 Shelley: *The Indian Serenade*
 - (d) Swinburne: *Rococo*
 Henley: *Invictus*
 - (e) Poe: *Israfel*
 Emerson: *The Problem*
14. It is sometimes asserted that there are four parts, either present or implied, to all successful lyric units. In each of the follow-

ing poems these four steps in lyric construction are represented in four stanzas: Ascertain for yourself what each part constitutes or represents in the stage of lyric development.

Wordsworth: *The Solitary Reaper*

Tennyson: *Break, Break, Break*

Clough: *Where Lies the Land*

15. Make a study of the successive stages of the lyrical mood in each of the following:

Milton: *Lycidas*

Dryden: *Alexander's Feast*

Shelley: *Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples*

Keats: *Ode to a Nightingale*

Yeats: *A Prayer for My Daughter*

Masefield: *London Town*

Sassoon: *The Old Huntsman*

Poe: *The Bells*

16. Test the reasonableness of the statement that without sorrow and death in the world there could have been no great lyric poetry—no enduring art.
17. What does George E. Woodbury mean by the following:

The substance of meaning in the poem is the emotion roused by the suggestion of the image; and however personal the lyric may be, it is universalized and made good for all men by the emotion which is the same in human nature. Lyrics, strictly speaking, are symbols of universal emotion which is conveyed or roused by the imagery.

18. Apply the following sentences, taken from Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, to lyric poetry:

The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings.

...the poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner.

19. In what respects is the following, taken from Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, particularly true of the lyric poet:

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination.

20. To what extent is the following statement of Goethe's a requisite for great lyric poetry:

I have never affected anything in my poetry. I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me to production. I have only composed love-songs when I have loved.

EXAMPLES

English Lyrics:

Anonymous: The Seafarer

The Wanderer

Deor's Lament

Cuckoo Song

Springtime

A Hymn to the Virgin

Alysoun

A Plea for Pity

Geoffrey Chaucer: Balade

Sir Thomas Wyatt: Forget Not Yet

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: The Means to Attain a Happy Life

George Gascoigne: The Lullaby of a Lover

Sir Edward Dyer: My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is

Edmund Spenser: Prothalamion

John Lyly: Apeles' Song (From *Campaspe*)

Robert Greene: Sephestia's Song to Her Child (From *Menaphon*)

The Shepherd's Wife's Song (From *Menaphon*)

George Peele: Cupid's Curse

Anonymous: Crabbed Age and Youth

Michael Drayton: Agincourt

Nicholas Breton: Phyllida and Corydon

Christopher Marlowe: The Passionate Shepherd

William Shakespeare: Who is Silvia (From *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

Under the Greenwood Tree (From *As You Like It*)

Fear No More the Heat o' th' Sun (From *Cymbeline*)

Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies (From *The Tempest*)

When I Consider Everything That Grows

When, in Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes

When to the Sessions of Sweet Silent Thought

Like As the Waves Make Towards the Pebbled Shore

Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds

Thomas Campion: The Man of Life Upright

Turn All Thy Thoughts to Eyes

Thomas Dekker: O Sweet Content

Ben Jonson: Hymn to Diana

To Celia

Simplex Munditiis

Sir Henry Wotton: The Character of a Happy Life

Francis Beaumont: Lines on the Tombs in Westminster Abbey

John Fletcher: Apatia's Song (From *The Maid's Tragedy*)

What Is Love

John Webster: Dirge (Call for the robin-red-breast and the wren)

Dirge (Hark, now everything is still)

George Wither: Shall I, Wasting in Despair

John Donne: The Indifferent

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

Love's Deity

The Funeral

A Hymn to God the Father

John Milton: On the Morning of Christ's Nativity

On Shakespeare

L'Allegro

Il Penseroso

Lycidas

On His Blindness

George Herbert: Virtue

The Quip

- The Collar
The Pulley
Thomas Carew: Disdain Returned
A Song (Ask me no more where Jove bestows)
Robert Herrick: The Argument of His Book
Cherry-Ripe
Corinna's Going A-Maying
To Electra
Upon a Child
The Night-Piece, to Julia
Sir John Suckling: The Constant Lover
Why So Pale and Wan
Richard Crashaw: Wishes, to His Supposed Mistress
Edmund Waller: Go Lovely Rose
Richard Lovelace: To Althea, from Prison
Andrew Marvell: An Horation Ode upon Cromwell's Return
from Ireland
The Garden
To His Coy Mistress
Henry Vaughan: The World
The Retreat
Departed Friends
Abraham Cowley: The Wish
John Dryden: A Song for St. Cecilia's Day
Alexander's Feast; or The Power of Music
John Gay: Youth's the Season (From *The Beggar's Opera*)
Galatea (From *Acis and Galatea*)
Henry Carey: Sally in Our Alley
James Thomson: The Seasons
Castle of Indolence
Isaac Watts: A Cradle Hymn
Joseph Addison: The Spacious Firmament on High
Charles Wesley: Love Divine, All Love Excelling
Jesus, Lover of My Soul
Thomas Gray: Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard
William Collins: Ode to Evening
Ode (How sleep the brave)
Dirge in Cymbeline
John Newton: The Lord's Day

Edward Perronet: Coronation
 Oliver Goldsmith: The Deserted Village
 William Cowper: On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture
 Augustus Montague Toplady: Rock of Ages
 William Blake: Introduction to *Songs of Innocence*

A Cradle Song

The Tiger

Love's Secret

Robert Burns: To a Mouse

To a Mountain Daisy

Lines to John Lapraik

Address to the Deil

My Nanie, O

Green Grow the Rashers, O

Auld Lang Syne

Ae Fond Kiss

Sweet Afton

Ye Flowery Banks

Scots, Wha Hae

Highland Mary

Mary Morrison

William Wordsworth: The Prelude

To the Cuckoo

Composed upon Westminster Bridge

London, 1802

Ode to Duty

Ode on Intimations of Immortality

The World Is Too Much with Us

Sir Walter Scott: Coronach

Proud Maisie

Bonny Dundee

Hunting Song

Here's a Health to King Charles

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: France: an Ode

Walter Savage Landor: Rose Aylmer

Thomas Campbell: Ye Mariners of England

Thomas Hood: The Song of the Shirt

The Bridge of Sighs

Thomas Moore: The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls

The Last Rose of Summer

George Gordon (Lord) Byron: When We Two Parted
She Walks in Beauty
Fare Thee Well
So, We'll Go No More A Roving
The Prisoner of Chillon

Percy Bysshe Shelley: Hymn to Intellectual Beauty
Ode to the West Wind
To a Skylark
To Night
Adonais
The Indian Serenade
To— (One word is too often profaned)
Lines: "When the Lamp Is Shattered"

John Keats: On First Looking into Chapman's Homer
When I have Fears
Ode to a Nightingale
Ode on a Grecian Urn
To Autumn
Ode on Melancholy
Lines on the Mermaid Tavern

Alfred (Lord) Tennyson: Ulysses
Break, Break, Break
Bugle Song (From *The Princess*)
Tears, Idle Tears (From *The Princess*)
Home They Brought Her Warrior Dead (From *The Princess*)
Sweet and Low (From *The Princess*)
In Memoriam
Come Into the Garden, Maud (From *Maud*)
O That 'T Were Possible (From *Maud*)
Rizpah
Crossing the Bar

Robert Browning: The Year's at the Spring (From *Pippa Passes*)
Cavalier Tunes
Meeting at Night
Parting at Morning
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad
Evelyn Hope
Love Among the Ruins

- Prospice
 Epilogue
 Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Cry of the Children
 Cowper's Grave
 Sonnets from the Portuguese
 Arthur Hugh Clough: Qua Cursum Ventus
 Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth
 Matthew Arnold: Requiescat
 Self-Dependence
 Rugby Chapel
 Thyrsis
 A Wish
 Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Blessed Damozel
 The House of Life
 Christina Rossetti: When I Am Dead, My Dearest
 We Buried Her Among the Flowers
 The Summer is Ended
 William Morris: Prologue (From *The Earthly Paradise*)
 Ogier the Dane (From *The Earthly Paradise*)
 In the White-Flowered Hawthorne Brake (From *The Earthly Paradise*)
 The Day Is Coming
 George Meredith: The Lark Ascending
 Requiem
 Marian
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Song in Time of Order
 A Match
 The Garden of Proserpine
 Rococo
 A Child's Laughter
 James Thomson: Mater Tenebrarum
 This Is the Heath of Hampstead (From *Sunday at Hampstead*)
 William Ernest Henley: O, Gather Me the Rose
 Invictus
 The Passing
 Robert Louis Stevenson: Whole Duty of Children (From *A Child's Garden of Verses*)
 Bed In Summer (From *A Child's Garden of Verses*)
 Requiem

Thomas Hardy: First or Last

The Sight

The Blinded Bird

The Reminder

The Man He Killed

The Coming of the End

Robert Bridges: "The Very Names of Things Beloved are
"Dear" (From *The Growth of Love*)

Triolet

London Snow

The Evening Darkens Over

Pater Filio

The Idle Life I Lead

Moonlight

Arthur O'Shaughnessy: Ode (We are the music makers)

Alice Meynell: Parted

The Shepherdess

Oscar Wilde: Requiescat

William Watson: Wordsworth's Grave

Francis Thompson: The Hound of Heaven

Alfred Edward Housman: Loveliest of Trees

Reveille

Oh, See How Thick the Goldcup Flowers

When I was One-and-Twenty

To An Athlete Dying Young

White in the Moon the Long Road Lies

Think No more, Lad

Sir Henry Newbolt: Drake's Drum

Clifton Chapel

George William Russell: Time

When

The Earth Breath

William Butler Yeats: The Song of the Faeries

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

When You are Old

The Wild Swans at Coole

A Prayer for My Daughter

The Voice

Rudyard Kipling: Gunga Din

L'Envoi

Recessional

Stephen Phillips: Faces at a Fire

Hilaire Belloc: The South Country

William Henry Davies: Leisure

Money

The Muse

Ralph Hodgson: Time, You Old Gipsy Man

The Bull

John McCrae: In Flanders Fields

Walter De La Mare: Miss Loo

The Veil

All That's Past

The Listeners

John Masefield: A Consecration

Sea-Fever

The West Wind

London Town

On Growing Old

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: The Whisperers

The Empty Purse

Harold Monroe: Midnight Lamentations

Alfred Noyes: Song: Now the purple night is past (From
Drake)Thomas Dekker's Song (From *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*)

James Stephens: Etched in Frost

Little Things

John Freeman: English Hills

David Herbert Lawrence: Study

Siegfried Sassoon: The Old Huntsman

Morning Glory

Picture-Show

Rupert Brooke: The Old Vicarage, Grantchester

Pine-Trees and the Sky: Evening

The Soldier

Winifred M. Letts: The Spires of Oxford

Robert Graves: Babylon

Hate Not, Fear Not

Brittle Bones

American Lyrics:

Anne Bradstreet: To My Dear and Loving Husband

Timothy Dwight: Columbia

Philip Freneau: The Power of Fancy

On Retirement

The Indian Burying Ground

On a Honey Bee

Fitz-Greene Halleck: On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake

William Cullen Bryant: Thanatopsis

To a Waterfowl

O Fairest of the Rural Maids

To the Fringed Gentian

Joseph Rodman Drake: Elfin Song

Edward Coate Pinkney: A Health

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Each and All

Concord Hymn

The Humble-Bee

The Problem

Friendship

Nathaniel Parker Willis: Unseen Spirits

Absalom

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Footsteps of Angels

Hymn to the Night

My Lost Youth

The Bells of Lynn

Divina Commedia

The Cross of Snow

Nature

A Dutch Picture

John Greenleaf Whittier: Proem

Telling the Bees

Laus Deo

The Eternal Goodness

Edgar Allan Poe: 'Neath Blue-Bell or Streamer (Song from

Al Aaraof)

To Helen

Israfel

The Raven

The Bells

- Annabel Lee
 Eldorado
 Ulalume
 Oliver Wendell Holmes: My Aunt
 The Last Leaf
 The Chambered Nautilus
 The Living Temple
 Dorothy Q
 James Russell Lowell: Ode Recited at the Harvard Com-
 memoration
 Aladdin
 St. Michael the Weigher
 Julia Ward Howe: Battle-Hymn of the Republic
 Walt Whitman: Pioneers! O Pioneers!
 Come Up From the Fields, Father
 O Captain! My Captain!
 When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd
 Darest Thou Now, O Soul
 George Henry Boker: Dirge for a Soldier
 Bayard Taylor: Bedouin Song
 Emily Dickinson: The Day Came Slow
 To Hear an Oriole
 I Never Saw a Moor
 To Fight Aloud
 I Like to See It Lap the Miles
 Edmund Clarence Stedman: The Hand of Lincoln
 Thomas Bailey Aldrich: Palabras Cariñosas
 Memory
 Dirge
 I'll Not Confer with Sorrow
 Bret Harte: Her Letter
 John Hay: Jim Bludso
 Edward Rowland Sill: The Fool's Prayer
 Joaquin Miller: Columbus
 Sidney Lanier: Song of the Chattahoochee
 The Marshes of Glynn
 A Ballad of Trees and the Master
 Richard Watson Gilder: The 'Cello
 James Whitcomb Riley: The Old Swimmin'-Hole
 When the Frost Is on the Punkin

- The Old Man and Jim
Edwin Markham: The Man With the Hoe
Frank Dempster Sherman: A Rhyme for Priscilla
Aspiration
Bliss Carman: The Joys of the Road
Richard Hovey: Comrades
Spring
The Sea Gypsy
William Vaughn Moody: Road-Hymn for the Start
Gloucester Moors
A Grey Day
An Ode in Time of Hesitation
Edwin Arlington Robinson: Miniver Cheevy
Partnership
The Master
The House on the Hill
Cassandra
Edgar Lee Masters: Petit, the Poet
Hare Drummer
Isaiah Beethoven
Amy Lowell: A Tulip Garden
Patterns
Robert Frost: Mending Wall
The Road Not Taken
Birches
Dust of Snow
Carl Sandburg: The Harbor
Under the Harvest Moon
Losers
Loam
Vachel Lindsay: General William Booth Enters Into Heaven
Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight
I Heard Immanuel Singing
Sara Teasdale: Open Windows
I Shall Not Care
Gifts
The Wayfarer
Thoughts
If Death Is Kind

Ezra Pound: An Immorality

Night Litany

John Gould Fletcher: In the Open Air

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado

Conrad Aiken: "Dead Cleopatra Lies in a Crystal Casket"

"All Lovely Things Will Have an Ending"

White Nocturne

Edna St. Vincent Millay: Exiled

Wraith

Elegy Before Death

CHAPTER IX

ODE

THE ode is the first type of lyric poetry which we shall consider. It is a kind of verse-orator; and, like an oration, is capable of soaring to the highest peaks of imagination and feeling. In writing an ode it is especially essential that the spirit of the poet be deeply stirred. Enthusiasm is the very essence of this form of poetry; but it must be rendered with great delicacy and discretion. Countless odes have been forgotten because the poet permitted his emotional ardor to transmute itself into lines that were stained with affected sentiment and inflated rhetoric. When, however, English and American literatures can boast of such masterly poems as Coleridge's *France; An Ode*, Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, and Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*, a discussion of the ode as a type of poetry is inevitable.

HISTORY

The writers of both Italy and Greece are associated with the development of the English Ode. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Italians developed a form known as the *canzone* or *ode*. This was but one of several forms which the English writers imitated in the later sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries—a time when Italian art was greatly respected in England. At least three memorable odes were written by English poets during this period of Italian influence. Spenser's *Epithalamion* (1595) is not only the first excellently written ode in our language, but also the best marriage hymn ever penned by an English author. In its twenty-three stanzas the poet enthusiastically covers the whole of his wedding day, from early morning till late at night. In the fifth stanza nature greets the poet's love most joyously as she wakes on her marriage morn:

Wake, now my loue, awake! for it is time,
 The rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,
 All ready to her siluer coche to clyme;
 And Phoebus gins to shew his glorious hed.
 Hark how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr laies
 And carroll of louees praise.
 The merry larke hir mattins sings aloft;
 The thrush replyes; the Mauis descant playes,
 The Ouzell shrills, the Ruddock warbles soft,
 So goodly all agree with sweet consent,
 To this dayes merriment.
 Ah! my deere love, why doe ye sleepe thus long,
 When meeter were that ye should now awake,
 T'awayt the coming of your joyous make,
 And hearken to the birds louelearned song,
 The deawy leaues among?
 For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
 That all the woods them answer, and theyr eccho ring.

Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629), written when the author was twenty-one years old, shows the genius of young Milton at its highest point, and sounds a majestic note such as England had not before heard. How perfectly he selects words, and blends sound and sense in the following:

The oracles are dumb;
 No voice or hideous hum
 Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
 Apollo from his shrine
 Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
 No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
 Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
 And the resounding shore,
 A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
 From haunted spring, and dale
 Edged with poplar pale,
 The parting genius is with sighing sent;
 With flower-inwoven tresses torn
 The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

The third of these outstanding odes is that of Marvell's *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* (1650), which presents a criticism of a great man in his true setting. His laudable qualities are expressed in a style, notable for its compression, its severity, and its beauty. There comes a time when youth must forsake the pursuits of peace for the more stirring action of war:

Removing from the wall
The corselet of the hall.

Cromwell answered the call of duty; for a spirit like his could not be restrained at such a time. He rent "Palaces and temples," and turned the history of England into a new channel. Marvell is not forgetful of the claims of monarchy:

Though Justice against Fate complain,
And plead the ancient rights in vain;
But those do hold or break,
As men are strong or weak.

But when kings are too weak, they must make room
Where greater spirits come.

While Cromwell, both as soldier and statesman, deserves great credit, Marvell pauses, in his compassion and charity, to pity Charles' fate:

He nothing common did, or mean,
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try;

Nor called the gods with vulgar spite
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed.

The poet intimates, thereupon, both the advantages and disadvantages of the king's death. Returning to Cromwell, Marvell lauds him for his subjugation of Ireland, for his sense of justice and humility:

Nor yet grown stiffer with command,
But still in the republic's hand.

The last stanza is significant. If England is to profit by the Civil War, the coming leaders must be prompted by the same high motives that actuated Cromwell:

Besides the force it has to fright
The spirits of the shady night,
The same arts that did gain
A power, must it maintain.

These foregoing odes, especially that of Marvell's, are all patterned somewhat on the Horatian model. They exemplify the sober, solemn thought and well tempered spirit of an Horatian ode. According to John B. Hauge, the "Odes of Horace" teach moderation, contentment, and peace. They reprove avarice, ambition, and extravagance. They hold up proper ideals of taste, of honor, and of truth. These three odes were written in a regular though intricate stanzaic structure. Marvell's ode came at the parting of the ways. The influence of the Greek poet, Pindar, came to be felt several years after Marvell's ode was written and was chiefly instrumental in turning the English ode into a new course.

The name of Pindar, the Greek poet, is therefore more directly associated with the later and more prevailing odic type in England and America. The Greeks considered all lyric poems as odes; but the English ode is linked up with those Pindaric lyrics which were written for the celebrations following the victory of some great athlete in the national games. These odes, though seemingly regular in appearance, have yet a subtle variation in meter which changes with the progressive stages of the emotion. The graceful dance of a chorus usually accompanied the recitation of Pindar's odes. There were three movements. The first stanza, or *strophe*, was chanted while the chorus moved to the right on the stage; the second stanza, or *antistrophe*, while the chorus moved to the left; and the third stanza, or *epode*, while ~~the chorus remained~~ in the center of the stage. Thus the unit of the Pindaric ode consists of three strophes or stanzas, the poet being at liberty to use as many of these units as he desired.

While Abraham Cowley was an exile in France in 1645, he

became acquainted with the odes of Pindar. He studied and in turn wrote a number of odes in what he thought was after the Pindaric manner. Supposing that the Greek poet disregarded all rules of prosody as he was borne away by some stirring emotion, Cowley accordingly wrote his poems in whatever form the enthusiasm of the moment suggested. He disregarded the fact that irregularity of form in line and stanza is justifiable only when it heightens the effect of some changing emotion and blends perfectly with this changing sentiment. The result was a series of irregular lines and stanzas, haphazardly and, too often, inartistically arranged. Rhymes were used wherever they most conveniently fell. For some reason Cowley had clearly misunderstood the poems of Pindar. When the former published his loose and irregular odes in 1656, he set a fashion which was to call into being a series of odes which now comprise the largest body of our odic literature. A number of poets, chief among them William Congreve and Thomas Gray, experimented later with the strict Greek model, and employed the strophe, antistrophe, and epode divisions; but the metrical machinery in these creaks too audibly; and the poems, as a result, are stilted and uninspiring.

Over forty years after the publication of Cowley's odes, John Dryden wrote an ode in the Cowleyan manner, namely *Alexander's Feast: or The Power of Music*. This has the honor of being the first great ode in the language written in irregular stanzaic form. It was not until after 1760, however, that the poets in any great number began to imitate the "shapeless" odes of Cowley. The eighteenth century is generally lacking in great odic poetry. Thomas Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and William Collins' *Ode to Evening* are the only ones that challenge our attention. In the succeeding century, however, the golden age of odes was ushered in.

With few exceptions, those odic selections in which we are now chiefly interested were written in the nineteenth century. Those of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson fill a brilliant page in English letters; while in America, those of Lowell, Emerson, and Moody, though less inviting, should be read by every lover of odes. Some of these nineteenth century odes we shall consider in some detail after we have inquired further into those qualities which the typical ode possesses.

CHARACTERISTICS

When we consider the divergent nature of those poems which we classify as odes, such for example as Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, Coleridge's *France: An Ode*, and Shelley's *To a Skylark*, the definition of William Sharp will be found quite inclusive. "Any poem finely wrought," writes Mr. Sharp, "and full of high thinking, which is of the nature of an apostrophe, or of sustained intellectual meditation on a single theme of general purport should be classed as an ode."

The theme of the ode is of a noble and dignified nature. In fact, the ode is the most exalted of the lyric forms. The mood should be reflective and stately. The ode is particularly distinguishable by its high seriousness and emotional intensity. The general tone is marked by fervid interest and feeling. The profound subject calls for a correspondingly profound treatment. The ode concerns itself with general and with individual moods, with impersonal as often as with personal reflections. The poet becomes the spokesman for a group, as well as for himself. The ode is particularly appropriate for occasions that assume public or civic proportions. Hence it is that this type of poetry is often used by the poets laureate of England when they are called upon to commemorate an event of great moment, as that which induced Tennyson to write his *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* for the occasion of the Duke's state funeral. Because of the majesty and stateliness of the ode, it is a very difficult form to write and is thus less frequently attempted than other forms of lyrics. Happy, therefore, is the poet who, like Shelley and Keats, can rise to the occasion and sustain himself in its ethereal atmosphere.

The ode is a type of "poetical exposition." It is, therefore, concerned with a theme. This theme moves on by progressive stages to a fitting conclusion, as in Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*. The language, like the theme, is marked by a solemn beauty, a majestic phrasing, and a strong, stately rhythm. This stateliness is especially felt in Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*:

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;

Thou who art victory and law
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free,
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
 I call thee: I myself commend
 Unto thy guidance from this hour;
 O let my weakness have an end!
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice;
 The confidence of reason give;
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live.

With regard to its general appearance, the ode may be organized into regular stanzaic divisions, as in Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*; or into a series of irregular stanzaic divisions, as in Moody's *Ode in Time of Hesitation*. This gives rise to the most acceptable classification of odes, namely into *Regular* and *Irregular*. The quality of verse peculiar to odic literature will be stressed in connection with our discussion of the following famous examples.

ODE ON THE INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

In the realms of English and American poetry, no odes stand out more prominently than Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* (1807), Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* (1820), Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* (1820), and Lowell's *Commemoration Ode* (1865).

Though Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* observes a more perfect odic form than his *Intimations of Immortality*, the latter is dynamically the greater and the more widely known of the two. Its theme is as large as the heart of man: shall the soul live after death? For an answer Wordsworth turns to the days of childhood. As he reflects upon the happy days of his own early life and now observes the light-heartedness of other children about him, he is certain some change has come about:

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

As he looks into the faces of children, he sees there a certain inexpressible loveliness: the soft skin, the brilliant eyes, and the happy, confiding expression which plays upon their faces as if some kind spirit were lurking behind. The world to them is a place of inexplicable wonder. How soon these delicate bodies are to be marred! The hand of the world will place her rude fingers upon them and bring on days of care and labor. Wordsworth is led to believe that the objects about him are the same as they always were, and accordingly projects himself once more into the mood of childhood:

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal,
 The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day! if I were sullen
 While Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are culling
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

What then accounts for the change in him?

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

He could not answer this question immediately. Two years later he returned with a solution, which has rung down through the intervening century:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory we do come
From God, who is our home:

The child reflects that glorious world from which it has just emerged. As it grows older and takes on the customs of the world, it becomes coarsened and is farther and farther separated from the great eternity from which it had come. The mind responds less sensitively to beauty; and the whole of life becomes one round of imitation.

But fortunately man does not altogether lose sight of that world from which he has come. As he goes about his earthly tasks, he is reminded now and then of that prenatal existence:

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

For this Wordsworth is thankful. It is this divine spark that permits him, though numbed by daily cares and worries, to get glimpses of that heavenly country from which he came and toward which he is again moving. His earthly life, then, is "a barren land between two oceans of eternity." He has come from a beautiful country; he is likewise going toward a celestial land as glorious as that from which he had come.

If the body grows weaker and the mind becomes cold and hardened by worldly contacts, the soul may yet remain pure and lovely. In this thought Wordsworth takes courage. The latter part of life may in its way be as golden as the beginning. Although age has lost its youthful glow, it has become mellowed by years of experience and has taken on a richness that youth can never know.

Wordsworth does not hesitate to employ a variety of metrical devices. The stanzas are unequal in length; and they, in turn, employ lines of varying length:

The rainbow comes and goes,
 And lovely is the rose;
 The moon doth with delight
 Look round her when the heavens are bare;
 Waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair;
 The sunshine is a glorious birth;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

There are four trimeter lines, four tetrameter lines, and one hexameter line. The meter is iambic; but two anapestic feet and four trochaic feet are also used. This is but indicative of what we find throughout the entire poem. And yet with this irregular form the poet achieves excellent word music. His instrument plays, now a happy tune:

And all the earth is gay;
 Land and sea
 Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every beast keep holiday,

now a meditative, somber air:

Mighty Prophet! Seer blest
 On whom those truths do rest
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by;
 Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?

and then again a note of quiet triumph:

And o, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
 Forbode not any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
 I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway:
 I love the brooks which down their channels fret
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born day
 Is lovely yet;
 The clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober coloring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

About a decade later Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote his *Ode to the West Wind*. From the standpoint of constructional unity, no other ode has ever equaled it. The interplay between the effects of the West Wind upon the leaves, the clouds, and the sea is an amazing bit of composition. How effectively all these natural objects are applied to his own life in the fourth stanza:

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
 The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable!

and with what emotional intensity his petition finds expression:

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
 One too like thee; tameless, and swift, and proud.

Above all, what lyrical impact in the last stanza! Here is a superb figure of the tall trees of the forest as strings in a huge lyre, and the West Wind the unseen hand that touches them:

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is.

Then follows an entreaty, the like of which one rarely sees in English literature:

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy!

The closing line is in a different key. Both a breathless impatience and a hopeful resignation are in the unexpected ending:

O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

The *Ode to the West Wind* is written in three-line stanzas, rhyming *a-b-a*:

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's *being*,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves *dead*
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter *fleeing*,

The meter is iambic pentameter, although there are frequent departures. Shelley has the gift of selecting phrases that carry a wealth of suggestion. The flying leaves are likened to a "pestilence-stricken multitude." The "winged seeds" are "charioted" to their "dark wintry bed." Spring is represented as blowing her "clarion o'er the dreaming earth" to awaken the corpselike seeds. "Loose clouds" are shaken "from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean." The storm-laden clouds burst forth with "black rain, and fire, and hail." The waves on the wide Atlantic "cleave themselves into chasms." In strong contrast to these huge billows, his poetic mind sees for a moment the "sea-blossoms" and the "oozy woods" at the bottom of the ocean. He refers to the "panting" wave, the "skiey" speed of the clouds, the "autumnal" tone of the forest, and the "sapless" foliage of the ocean. These suggestive words, together with clear-ringing figures of speech, rhyming words, and lilting lines give us "mighty harmonies."

One more point we must notice. Parts one, two, and three end with the fervid petition, "Oh hear!" The agitation of mind

and soul is thus carried over from one part to another without loss of emotion. At the same time "Oh hear!" aids in fusing the various sections of the poem into one unbroken strain of gripping music.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Like Shelley, John Keats was also capable of imbuing his odes with the purest lyrical emotions. His *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* are fair and delicate creatures of his sensitive and finely discerning nature. They are as a breath from a garden of roses where buds are unfolding and where petals are also falling. The latter of these two odes was occasioned by the poet's observation of a Greek vase, whereon was sculptured two or three pastoral scenes:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

As the poet's eye muses upon the piper on the urn, how delicately he perceives that the mind can imagine far sweeter melodies than the ear can ever hear:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter;

As he looks at the sculptured figures on the vase, he thinks of the transitoriness of human blisses, as compared to the unceasing blessedness of those unchanging forms on the urn:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

This is one of the most clever sections in the entire piece. The Lover, having caught the maid, is about to kiss her. Thus the

the interest of the occasion was deep and thrilling. The summer afternoon was drawing to its close when the poet began the recital of the ode. . . . Our age has furnished many great historic scenes, but this Commemoration combined the elements of grandeur and pathos, and produced an impression as lasting as life.

Among the several memorable passages, the last few lines are most famous:

O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
 Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
 O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
 And letting thy set lips,
 Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
 The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
 What words divine of lover or of poet
 Could tell our love and make thee know it,
 Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
 What were our lives without thee?
 What all our lives to save thee?
 We reck not what we gave thee;
 We will not dare to doubt thee,
 But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

QUESTIONS

1. Read Shelley's *To a Skylark* and Meredith's *The Lark Ascending*. Why is the former classified as an ode, and not the latter?
2. After reading Gray's *The Progress of Poesy*, Coleridge's *France: An Ode*, Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*, Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and Spenser's *Prothalamion*, write down all the variations in subject and form that you notice as falling within the ode as a type of literature.
3. List the different kinds of stanzaic forms that you find in the various *regular* odes. William Sharp's *Great Odes*, Zeitlin and Rinaker's *Types of Poetry*, or any other good anthology of English literature will serve for this study.
4. Differentiate between such poems as Milton's *Lycidas* and Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*.

Why is the former not listed as an ode? The same study may be made of Shelley's *Adonais* and Emerson's *Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing*.

5. How is the power of music portrayed in Dryden's *Alexander's Feast: or The Power of Music*? What are the historical incidents underlying the poem?
6. What historical facts are associated with Marvell's *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*? What opportunity had Marvell for studying Cromwell? Why did Cromwell go to Ireland?
7. How does Wordsworth characterize Duty in his *Ode to Duty*? This ode is said to be "the embodiment of manly Puritanism." Show wherein this is true. Show how the poet has utilized philosophy for odic purposes.
8. What is Coleridge's attitude toward freedom in *France: An Ode*?
9. Make a study of the personal and impersonal elements in Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.
10. The *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* was one of Tennyson's favorite poems for reading aloud. Show wherein the poem is adapted for this purpose. How does it compare with Lowell's *Commemoration Ode* in this particular?
11. What song and odic characteristics are to be found in Emerson's *Boston Hymn*?
12. What is Moody's attitude toward war in *An Ode in Time of Hesitation*? Study the verse and stanzaic structure of this ode.
13. What claims have Whitman's *Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood* and Markham's *Lincoln, the Man of the People* to odic classification?
14. Read Hood's *Ode on Autumn* and Collins' *Ode to Evening*. What particular aspects of nature do they praise?
15. The ode has been called a "slow lyric." Discuss the significance of this.

EXAMPLES

English Odes:

Edmund Spenser: Epithalamion

Prothalamion

- Ben Jonson: A Pindaric Ode
 On the Death of Sir H. Morison
 Robert Herrick: An Ode for Ben Jonson
 John Milton: On the Morning of Christ's Nativity
 Andrew Marvell: Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from
 Ireland
 John Dryden: Alexander's Feast: or The Power of Music
 A Song for St. Cecilia's Day
 Thomas Gray: Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College
 The Progress of Poesy
 William Collins: Ode to Evening
 The Passions
 William Wordsworth: Ode to Duty
 Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of
 Early Childhood
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Dejection: An Ode
 France: An Ode
 Lord Byron: On Venice
 Percy Bysshe Shelley: Ode to the West Wind
 To a Skylark
 John Keats: Ode to a Nightingale
 Ode on a Grecian Urn
 Ode on Melancholy
 Thomas Hood: Ode on Autumn
 Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Ode on the Death of the Duke of
 Wellington
 George Meredith: Ode to the Comic Spirit
 Ode to France: December, 1870
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: Ode on the Eve of Revolution

American Odes:

- Philip Freneau: The Power of Fancy
 Ralph Waldo Emerson: Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing
 Boston Hymn
 James Russell Lowell: Commemoration Ode
 Ode to Happiness
 Sidney Lanier: The Marshes of Glynn
 The Centennial Cantata
 Bayard Taylor: The National Ode
 William Vaughn Moody: An Ode in Time of Hesitation

CHAPTER X

ELEGY

GOETHE, the great German poet, once remarked that death is "the mainspring of English literature." Death does furnish not only the occasion for the production of works of art, but, in a larger sense, this mysterious messenger has been the propelling force behind all great art. "Our sweetest songs," says Shelley, "are those that tell a saddest thought." Poe was of the opinion that "melancholy is . . . the most legitimate of all the poetic tones." It is the brevity of our span of years that makes life so sacred. The theme of death is ever new, as fresh today as when Eve stooped over the dead body of her son Abel. Grief is a language every heart can speak. It is but natural that there should be a type of poetry which gives expression and relief to sorrow. The poetic form which does this most directly and most consciously is the *elegy*.

HISTORY

The elegiac mood in literature is as old as the theme of death itself. If we peruse the pages of oriental and classical literatures, for example, we find writers giving way to outbursts of sorrow over death, and seeking to perpetuate the memory of departed loved ones. About three thousand years ago the women of Israel set aside four times in each year when they might publicly express their grief for the beautiful daughter of Jephthah who was sacrificed as the result of her father's vow, that if he were successful in the battle, he would offer to God as a burnt offering whatsoever first came to him out of his house. What first came was his only daughter and his only child. Of the many Hebrew elegies, none are so impressive as those of King David, first over Saul and Jonathan:

Thy glory, O Israel,
Is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!

Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
Neither fields of offerings:

. . . .

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

. . . .

How are the mighty fallen!
And the weapons of war perished!

When news of Absalom's death reached his father, David, a simple but powerful cry escaped him:

O my son Absalom,
My son, my son Absalom!
Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son, my son!

In Homer's *Iliad*, Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen poured out their grief over the bier of Hector. We have the mournings of the chorus for Antigone in Sophocles' great play, *Antigone*. In the Old English epic, *Beowulf*, while Beowulf's body was being consumed on the funeral pyre, an old woman, possibly the warrior's wife,

chanted a dreary dirge of woe.

Although the elegiac strain is noticeable in such Old English poems as *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, it is not until 1369-70 that the first noteworthy elegy appears in English literature,

namely Chaucer's *Book of the Duchesse*, written in commemoration of Blanche of Castile, wife of John of Gaunt. Elegies did not become popular, however, until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In this period an elegy of the first magnitude appeared, which continues to hold a high, if not the highest place among English elegies, namely Milton's *Lycidas*. The next elegy of more than usual importance was given to the English readers in 1750. Thomas Gray worked, off and on, eight years on the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*; but he created a poem that has been read continuously now for several centuries.

The nineteenth century yielded at least four superb elegies. Shelley wrote *Adonais* in memory of John Keats. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* commemorated the death of Arthur Hallam. Arnold composed *Thyrsis* on the occasion of Clough's death. The American poet, Walt Whitman, enshrined the memory of Abraham Lincoln in *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, one of the best threnodies that has come out of the Civil War period. Of the foregoing, *Adonais* and *Thyrsis* follow the same Greek models as did *Lycidas*. *In Memoriam* is so lengthy a poem (3000 lines) that its inclusion in the list of elegies is often questioned. It is really composed of 130 smaller lyrics, often loosely joined together. Despite these constructional objections, the poem was so directly inspired by personal affection and is so strongly saturated with the theme of death that it falls more naturally within the province of the elegy than in that of any other type of poetry.

CHARACTERISTICS

We may define the elegy as a lyric which is occasioned either by the death of an individual or by a general sense of the inevitability and pathos of death. The poet may voice his own personal feelings; or he may be the spokesman for a community. The general tone in the elegy is formal and dignified, mournful and meditative. Though its mission is one of sorrow, it refrains from tears, preferring a quiet pensiveness to an exhibition of overwhelming grief. The general impression is that of a calm, musical, and sustained reflection. We think of *Lycidas* and *Adonais* as typical elegies, "subdued and harmonious in color, without high lights or deep shadows."

Although the elegy is a poem of lamentation, suggestions of hope and faith are not wanting. In fact our greatest elegies would cease to be so were it not for the inclusion of that solacing element which tends to allay the grief. *Lycidas*, *Adonais*, *In Memoriam*, and *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* would be flat without it. John Keats and Abraham Lincoln would be left in the cold grave; and Edward King and Arthur Hallam would be consigned forever to their watery tombs. The thought of immortality is found to be an essential part of every great elegy.

The elegy prefers the stately iambic rhythm; for with it there can be effected more significantly a slow, somber motion that is inevitably associated with the idea of death. This does not mean that all elegies are written in the iambic meter. Poe, Hood, Arnold, and others have used anapestic, dactylic, and trochaic measures; but when we read, for example, Hood's *The Bridge of Sighs*, we invariably feel that the dactylic rhythm is a bit too lively for the theme:

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care:
Fashioned so slenderly
Young and so fair!

Etc.

In writing elegies, poets seem to prefer as their setting the autumn and winter seasons, rather than the life-giving spring or the full-blooming summer. Arnold's *Rugby Chapel* is pervaded by the mood which is conveyed in the first few lines:

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent.

These lines reflect a characteristic elegiac mood in such expressions as *coldly, sadly, autumn evening, withered leaves, fade into dimness, and silent*. The evening with its twilight and gathering gloom is more in keeping with the idea of death than the brightness and activity of the day. It follows that those objects that are associated with darkness and death, such as owls and yew trees, are also preferred.

Those poems on death which are limited to a brief outpouring of emotion are often designated as *dirges* or *laments*. They make no attempt to present the cause of the grief, to express the doubts and questionings of Providence, and to enter into a statement of those philosophical or religious opinions which bring consolation. They are content to utter cries of grief and disappointment, without caring to indicate the attendant circumstances. Lord Byron's *Oh! Snatched Away in Beauty's Bloom* is one of the most effective in this class:

Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

Arnold's *Requiescat* (meaning, *May she rest in peace*), Landor's *Rose Aylmer*, Tennyson's *Break, Break, Break*, Burns' *Lament for Culloden*, and Whitman's *O Captain, My Captain* are also admirably written.

Let us now examine more carefully three famous, as well as representative elegies.

LYCIDAS

Milton's *Lycidas* has a rural setting, with shepherds as characters—a typically pastoral poem. Pastoral poetry was popular throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the summer of 1637 Milton received word that his old classmate, Edward King, had drowned off the Welsh coast. At the re-opening of college, Milton was asked to contribute a poem to a memorial volume which King's Cambridge friends had decided to issue in his memory. Milton responded with *Lycidas*. Although Milton was not in any sense a close friend of Edward King's, there was something about his schoolmate that challenged the young poet's interest. In the youthful King his college friends saw promise of a great and useful career. King was preparing for the ministry. As Milton meditated upon his friend's death, he saw in him a type of "Shepherd" (minister) who would save the hungry sheep (church members) from the "grim wolf." For three years or more prior to this time Milton was becoming incensed over the corruptions of the church; the indifference and worldliness of her clergy distressed and angered him. Here was a challenging idea, which, when linked to the untimely death of young King, enlisted Milton's best efforts. The desire to reform the Episcopal régime became, accordingly, a noticeable objective in the writing of *Lycidas*. The use of the elegiac form as a vehicle for the setting forth of some cause is not uncommon. While the death of an individual furnishes the occasion for the writing of *Lycidas*, the grief takes on a general, rather than an individual aspect, an abstract rather than a personal significance.

In the first fourteen lines, Milton gives his reasons for the writing of *Lycidas*:

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime

.

He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Having invoked the aid of the Muses in the next eight lines, he adopts the pastoral vein:

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountains, shade, and rill.

From the thought of their companionship the poet naturally passes on to a reflection of the greatness of the loss:

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,

.

Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.

The nymphs are reproved for not rushing to Lycidas' rescue:

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

The pathos of the drowning episode brings on a fit of despondency in line 64. Just as Lycidas was about to enter a life of service,

Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.

But consolation is to be found in the fact that Fame is not a thing of the earth, but of heaven; God will pronounce finally "on each deed."

In line 85 Milton inquires into the nature of the shipwreck that brought death to his friend. The only answer he receives is that

It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark.

In line 108 begins the severe indictment against the church. The accumulated ire of years was concentrated in these few lines. What a blow he can strike:

Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.

Having relieved himself of this pent-up wrath, the poet assumes a calmer mood in line 132. He calls to the vales to bring flowers to strew on the "laureate hearse" of Lycidas.

In line 165 we come to that matchless stanza, the apostrophe

to the shepherds. The poet, having expressed his grief, now finds consolation in the thought that Lycidas

is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his cozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.

We see by the foregoing discussion that part of the success of the poem is due to the variation and quick succession of moods. The poet begins with the thought of death. From that he passes to the picture of carefree youths in the fields with their sheep. In the next moment the tone is mournful: Nature has lost one of her beloved admirers. The speculative turn of mind follows as he thinks of the nature of King's death. From this mood the poet lapses into despondency as he reflects upon the premature death. There follows a philosophical and, in turn, a conjectural attitude of mind as the poet fixes the blame at last upon "that perfidious bark." Indignation flames up as he thinks of the pollution of the church and the need she has of such men like King. At the subsidal of this wrath Milton gives us a calm picture of the hearse strewn with beautiful flowers. Then with a fleeting regret that the body was never recovered, the poet becomes hopeful and indeed happy as he sees King in Heaven. At the close the artist adopts an optimistic strain as he determines to forget the sorrow and to look forward to a better day. The basic passions of life are mirrored in this emotional panorama.

The poem reflects the learning of Milton; mythology, theology, and nature at his command. Notice how discriminatingly he characterizes some of the flowers in these delicately shaded lines:

Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,

The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet
 The glowing violet,
 The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
 And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,

We, like Milton, have often seen the shadows of hills and mountains lengthening out as the sun went down, but it has never occurred to us to express it thus:

And now the sun had stretched out all the hills.

The various moods, together with his great learning, Milton presents passionately and musically in iambic pentameter rhyming lines, which he adapts not only to peaceful moods:

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
 While the still morn went out with sandals gray;

but likewise to ire-laden thoughts:

What recks it them? What need they? They are sped
 And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
 Besides what the grim wolf, with privy paw,
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Gray's *Elegy* is not an elegy in the sense that *Lycidas* is an elegy. It was not called into being by the death of any particular person, it is rather a meditative speculation on death in general.

Artistically, Gray's poem is a masterpiece. The atmosphere is conveyed in the first stanzas:

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;
Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Night is approaching. The landscape is fading. So "solemn" a "stillness" pervades that the beetle can be heard wheeling "his droning flight." From the "ivy-mantled tower" of the church, steeped in the gathering twilight, comes the mournful call of the owl. The moon is up. Near-by the shadows of the elms and yew trees are falling across the faintly visible tombs which hold the remains of the "forefathers of the hamlet." We cannot but read the lines in a slow, solemn, hesitant tone of voice.

Seated in the churchyard, the poet's mind goes back to the time when the forefathers were alive, surrounded by loved ones, and going about their daily work in field and forest. They were modest folk, poor, and unknown to fame; but opportunity did not knock at their door, otherwise some of them might have been Miltons and Cromwells. As it was they never rose to distinction. What native ability they had remained undeveloped; and they died as they had lived—simple, hard-working, honest people of the soil.

As the poet gives a parting thought to the tombstones before him and the inscriptions which reflect their homely faith and hope, he thinks of the day when he too, like these, will suddenly and quietly enter the great Hereafter.

So well has Gray expressed these universal thoughts in simple poetry that the poem is just as appealing now as it ever was. The style is very compact. Take, for example, such a stanza as

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

The words of the poem are familiar to everyone. There are no intricate figures of speech. He is fond of personification:

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil;

but this figurative element blends perfectly with his theme. The verse structure is simple, consisting of quatrains, rhyming *a-b-a-b*. The staid iambic pentameter meter is followed throughout.

The *Elegy*, then, owes its popularity, not to the novelty or profundity of its thought, but to the manner in which the common, everyday thoughts of humanity find expression. Readers delight in its soft, melancholic mood. Its simple contrasts between death and life; its homely lesson on ambition and honor, on the all-leveling power of the grave; its humble sermon on the influence of environment; and its reminder of the inevitability of death—all are a part of this benevolent commentary on life and death.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

Walt Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* occupies a unique place in elegiac poetry. In the opening years of the Civil War, Whitman was called South to nurse his brother George, who lay wounded in Washington. It was in this way that Whitman was introduced to his war work, that of nurse in the Washington hospitals. Here he brought cheer to the wounded by his daily visits, and endeared himself to all those with whom he became acquainted. Even in 1865, when Whitman accepted a position in the Indian Bureau of the Department of the Interior in order to support himself, he continued his attentions to the wounded. Whitman often saw Lincoln, and there grew up a warm attachment for the President, which can best be felt in *O Captain, My Captain*. When Lincoln fell a martyr, to Whitman it was not only a national loss, but a personal misfortune.

In *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* the despair of the nation at the death of Lincoln is symbolized in the lilac, star, and hermit thrush. Having expressed the greatness of the loss, he sees, in the fervor of his imagination, the coffin with its precious burden passing through the country:

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women
standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,

With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the
unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong
and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these
you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

Although the loss is an irreparable one, the poet finds consolation in "soothing death." Every human being is ever nigh Death, and will eventually embrace "delicate death." Although life in the "fathomless" universe is interesting and precious, yet there comes a time when man welcomes the final summons and rejoices to meet "the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death." Then forever will the body gratefully nestle close to its "deliveress," knowing full well that she will reveal nothing concerning those whom she liberates. Any poet would have been pleased to claim this lyrical apostrophe to Death:

Come lovely and soothing Death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come un-
falteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
 Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for
 thee,
 And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are
 fitting,
 And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.
 The night in silence under many a star,
 The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
 And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
 And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.
 Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
 Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the
 prairies wide,
 Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
 I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

In his early days, Swinburne regarded this poem "the most sonorous anthem ever chanted in the church of the world."

You will observe that Whitman's poem is not written in any fixed meter. The movement is based upon a broad or irregular rather than on a regular pattern. To this general rhythm is usually given the name of *free verse* or *vers libre*. Although Whitman "introduced" this form to American readers in the mid-nineteenth century, it was by no means new; for the Hebrew authors of *Psalms* and of *Job* used it no less than four hundred years before the birth of Christ. The greatest appeal of free-verse lies in the freedom which it gives the poet of using a variety of rhythmical effects instead of being restricted to a uniform meter. A broad irregular movement therefore characterizes free verse, and enables it more easily to secure subtle effects. Its unit is not the foot or line, but the stanza or strophe. Though it does not employ a definite meter, it uses the other devices of poetry, like assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and balance.

QUESTIONS

1. In what sense are *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Chevy Chase*, and *The Twa Corbies* elegiac ballads?
2. Discuss the elegiac qualities in the following Old English lyrics: *Deor's Lament*, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Ruined Burg*, and *The Banished Wife's Complaint*.

3. To what extent is there an elegiac strain in all great lyric poetry?
4. Compare Bryant's *Thanatopsis* with Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. What similarities in theme do you notice?
5. What are your impressions of Matthew Arnold as a writer of elegies? In this connection read his *Requiescat*, *The Scholar Gipsy*, *Thyrsis*, and *Rugby Chapel*.
6. Observe the variations in the elegy as a type by reading Shakespeare's *Fear no more the heat o' the sun*, Scott's *Coronach*, Poe's *Annabel Lee*, Burns' *Highland Mary*, Hood's *The Bridge of Sighs*, Whittier's *Telling the Bees*, and Willis' *Absalom*.
7. Write a character sketch of John Keats on the basis of the information which you receive in Shelley's *Adonais*. Do the same for Dr. Thomas Arnold in Arnold's *Rugby Chapel*.
8. What thought is uppermost in each of the following:

Landor's *Rose Aylmer*
Tennyson's *Break, Break, Break*,
Arnold's *Requiescat*
Swinburne's *Ave Atque Vale*

9. What meter is used in each of the following? They are all different. Make a study of the appropriateness of each.

Cowper's *On the Loss of the Royal George*
Wordsworth's *Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower*
Scott's *Soldier Rest*
Shelley's *Adonais*
Landor's *Rose Aylmer*

10. Try to ascertain why Burns attains a greater emotional effect in *Highland Mary* and *Mary in Heaven* than does Poe in *Annabel Lee* and *To Helen*.

EXAMPLES

English Elegies:

Geoffrey Chaucer: Lament for the Dethe of the Duchesse
Blanchche

Sir John Skelton: Elegy on the Erl of Northumberlande

William Shakespeare: Fear no more the heat o' the sun (From
Cymbeline)

Robert Herrick: To Daffodils

John Milton: Lycidas

Epitaphium Damonis

Henry Vaughan: Departed Friends

Thomas Gray: Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

William Cowper: On the Loss of the Royal George

Robert Burns: Highland Mary

Mary in Heaven

Lament for Culloden

William Wordsworth: Elegiac Stanzas

She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways

Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower

Sir Walter Scott: Soldier Rest! Thy Warfare O'er (From *The
Lady of the Lake*)

Coronach (From *The Lady of the Lake*)

Walter Savage Landor: Rose Aylmer

Charles Wolfe: The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna

Thomas Hood: The Bridge of Sighs

The Death Bed

George Gordon, Lord Byron: O! Snatched Away in Beauty's
Bloom

To Thyrsa

Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Lament

A Dirge

Adonais

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Cowper's Grave

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Break, Break, Break

In Memoriam

Robert Browning: Evelyn Hope

La Saisiaz

Matthew Arnold: The Scholar Gypsy

Requiescat

Rugby Chapel

Thyrsis

George Meredith: Dirge in the Woods

Algernon Charles Swinburne: Ave Atque Vale

Thomas Hardy: She Hears the Storm

The Coming of the End
Robert Bridges: On a Lady Whom Grief For the Death of Her
 Betrothed Killed
Alice Meynell: Parted
Alfred Edward Housman: To an Athlete Dying Young
Lawrence Binyon: For the Fallen
Alfred Noyes: Niobe

American Elegies:

Washington Allston: On Coleridge
Fitz-Greene Halleck: On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake
William Cullen Bryant: The Past
 Thanatopsis
Ralph Waldo Emerson: Threnody
Nathaniel Parker Willis: Absalom
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Footsteps of Angels
John Greenleaf Whittier: Telling the Bees
Edgar Allan Poe: Annabel Lee
 To Helen
 Lenore
James Russell Lowell: After the Burial
Walt Whitman: O Captain! My Captain!
 When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd
Thomas William Parsons: Dirge
George Henry Boker: Dirge for a Soldier
Thomas Bailey Aldrich: Dirge
Vachel Lindsay: The Eagle That Is Forgotten

CHAPTER XI

SONNET

IN Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Slender remarks to Shallow and Evans: "I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here." This casual statement reflects Shakespeare's interest in the sonnet; for his enthusiasm led him to write a hundred and fifty-four of these short poems, upon which, alone, his fame might have been secure. The sonnet has the distinction of having enlisted the creative genius of our very greatest poets. John Milton is credited with only seventeen; but they are like so many glittering "two-edged swords." Edmund Spenser's hundred and twenty, though less engaging than Shakespeare's and Milton's, are yet a credit to the great author of *The Faerie Queene*. William Wordsworth was so enthusiastic about the sonnet that he reached the point of satiety only after he had written over four hundred of them. The romanticists Byron, Shelley, and Keats; and the Victorians Arnold, Rossetti, and Meredith—all were attracted to this

precious jewel carved most curiously.

HISTORY

The sonnet originated in Italy. Just where the Italian poets first got the suggestion is not definitely known. They may have borrowed the form, or something similar to it, from the Provençal troubadours; or they may have evolved it themselves, either in Italy proper or in Sicily. Among the earliest known writers of the form in Italy are Ludovico della Vernaccia, Giacomo da Lentino, and Piero delle Vigne, all of the early thirteenth century. The first poet to write a sonnet in a form later accepted by the Italian poets was Guittone d'Arezzo (1220-1294). The sonnet quickly rose to favor; scores of Italian poets lavished their skill upon this fourteen-line jewel. But after the lapse of centuries, we look upon

Dante and Petrarch as typifying the best that the Italian sonneteers have given to literature.

Such an ingenious type as the sonnet was destined, however, to extend its sway to other lands. During the sixteenth century, while Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey were traveling in Italy, they were attracted to the Petrarchan sonnets. They decided to introduce the sonnet form to their English friends. Upon their return to England, therefore, they devoted the years between 1530 and 1540 to the writing of sonnets after the Italian manner. They published these poems in 1557, under the title, *Tottels Miscellany*. The English poets were rather hesitant, however, about adopting the sonnet form thus introduced.

About this time (1550-1580) the French experienced a revival of interest in the work of Greek, Latin, and Italian writers. This, in turn, stimulated the English poets to a renewed examination of Italian forms. The sonnets of Petrarch grew rapidly in favor; and within several decades thousands of sonnets were written, their authors inspired directly or indirectly by the Italian, Petrarch. No other period in English literature can compare to this Elizabethan age in the number and general excellency of sonnets produced. The work of Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Thomas Lodge, Giles Fletcher, Henry Constable, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, and William Shakespeare is but an indication of the activity in this field of literature.

The rapid decline of the sonnet at the beginning of the seventeenth century is one of the strange events in the history of the English lyric. The decline may be attributed to several causes. The Puritans looked with disfavor upon such a form as the sonnet, wherein up to that time was to be found chiefly the idle praise of some lady's beauty. The opposition of Ben Jonson and John Donne was likewise instrumental in breaking the sonnet vogue. Later, however, the sonnet form was temporarily revived by John Milton. In his hands it became a new thing. Instead of being a vehicle of love, it became a "trumpet" through which he sounded stirring notes of action, faith, and rebuke, thus enlarging the former narrow bound of the subject matter by which the sonnet was restricted.

After Milton, the sonnet suffered almost total eclipse until the coming of Wordsworth and the romantics. As Milton had done before him, Wordsworth re-created the sonnet. He did not

hesitate to use it for the expression of philosophical and religious thoughts, or for the conveying of his ideas on nature and social reform. The mood in his poems is often one of austerity and sublimity. With him, the sonnet took on almost the simplicity and ease of conversational prose. Coleridge, Southey, Hunt, Byron, Shelley, and especially Keats carried forward the sonnet traditions during the early years of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the mid-Victorian period, the theme of love again dominated the sonnet; and a number of sonnet sequences were written, not unlike those of the Elizabethan era, setting forth the love of man and woman. Chief among these are Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, Rossetti's *The House of Life*, and Meredith's *Modern Love*. The sonnet form, thus reintroduced by Wordsworth, was carried forward uninterrupted by the nineteenth century poets. In our own century the sonnets of John Masefield, Edward Arlington Robinson, George Santayana, and especially those of Edna St. Vincent Millay have achieved distinction, and seem destined to find a place among the illustrious sonnets in the English language.

CHARACTERISTICS

The sonnet consists of fourteen iambic pentameter lines. This five-foot iambic meter is made clear by examining the first two lines of Milton's *On His Blindness*:

When I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,

Four authors, among others, have described this fourteen-line poem in sonnet form. Wordsworth defends the sonnet by reminding its detractors in *Scorn Not the Sonnet*, that

with this key

Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
 With it Camoëns soothed an exile's grief;
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow; a glow-worn lamp,

It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
 To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

(Tasso was an Italian poet of the sixteenth century, and Camoëns was a Portuguese poet of the same period.) The second of these sonnets, Rossetti's *The Sonnet*, opens with this splendid definition:

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—
 Memorial from the Soul's eternity
 To one dead deathless hour.

In *The Sonnet's Voice* Watts-Dunton likens the sonnet to
 Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach

.

For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach
 From its own depths, and rest within you, dear,
 As, through the billow voices yearning here,
 Great Nature strives to find a human speech.

Richard Watson Gilder is even more enthusiastic in his praise.
 To him the sonnet is a

pearly shell
 That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea;
 A precious jewel carved most curiously;
 It is a little picture painted well.
 What is a sonnet? 'Tis the tear that fell
 From a great poet's hidden ecstasy;
 A two-edged sword, a star, a song—ah me!
 Sometimes a heavy-tolling funeral bell.

In a sense it is strange that the sonnet should have risen to such pre-eminence in view of its restricted form. The question is rightly asked: Well, why fourteen lines? Why not twelve or sixteen or eighteen? The answer is that *fourteen* is the result of countless experiments. The balance between thought and form seems to be so finely established that any subsequent attempt at improvement has met with less successful results. Then, too, such geniuses as Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton have made the

fourteen-line sonnet famous and lent the greatness of their names to its support.

Although there are structural variations within the sonnet form itself, there are certain requisites which are applicable to the class as a whole. The general technical requirements which hold for lyric poetry are here most rigidly enforced. Everything about the sonnet must be smooth and natural. But one leading idea, thought, or feeling is treated. At the end there must be a sense of completeness and of adequacy. The rhymes should be varied and contrasted. For example, instead of using the same letters to express the rhyme sound, like in *tide, ride, or stain, plain*, such variations as *rhyme, time* and *arise, eyes* should be introduced. Above all, the rhymes cannot be forced. A certain end word should be used because it is the *only possible* one that *could* be used. Omissions or inversions, when resorted to for the sake of convenience, have no place in the sonnet. Long or difficult words add a jolting note quite foreign to the sonnet. The verse form must seem appropriate to the thought. The fourteen lines must strike the reader as being the proper mold for the thought expressed. About the entire sonnet there must be a charm of varied melody, of unaffectedness, of finality, of strength, dignity, and serenity.

ITALIAN SONNET

Those English sonnets which are modeled after the form used by the Italian poet, Petrarch, are called *Italian* or *Petrarchan* sonnets. This type of sonnet is divided into two parts: the first eight lines constitute what is known as the *octave*; and the last six lines are designated as the *sestet*. Petrarch followed a more intricate form than the English writers are wont to do. The first four lines in his sonnets presented the theme, the next four developed it, the first three lines in the *sestet* either confirmed what was advanced in the second quatrain or added some new suggestion, and the last three lines in the *sestet* brought the theme of the sonnet to a fitting close. In those English sonnets which are patterned on the Italian model, the thought divisions are identical with the octave and the *sestet*. In the octave the main thought, question, or problem is advanced; in the *sestet* it is completed appropriately. The break in thought and in the rhyme scheme, therefore, comes at the end of the eighth line.

The emotion usually rises in the octave and subsides in the sestet. This rise and fall has been likened by Theodore Watts-Dunton to a wave:

From heaving waters of the impassioned soul
 A billow of tidal music one and whole
 Flows in the "octave"; then, returning free,
 Its ebbing surges in the "sestet" roll
 Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.

That is, the interest rises with steady force in the octave, until it reaches the crest at the end of the eighth line, whereupon it rolls back until it disappears on the sandy shore. It is essential then that the sonneteer select a subject that will readily adapt itself to this divisional treatment. Longfellow's sixth sonnet in *Divina Commedia* well illustrates the principles which have just been enunciated:

O star of morning and of liberty!	(a)
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines	(b)
Above the darkness of the Apennines,	(b)
Forerunner of the day that is to be!	(a)
The voices of the city and the sea,	(a)
The voices of the mountains and the pines,	(b)
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines	(b)
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!	(a)
Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,	(c)
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,	(d)
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,	(e)
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,	(c)
In their own language hear the wondrous word,	(d)
And many are amazed and many doubt.	(e)

The rhyme scheme for the Italian octave, as will be noticed in the foregoing poem, is a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a. The word *Italy* thus ends the first wave of thought, and new rhyme sounds are introduced in *heights* and *heard*. Among the various sonneteers the sestet appears in various rhyme arrangements, those most frequently used being c-d-e-c-d-e and c-d-c-d-c-d. In his study of sonnets, Professor L. T. Weeks announces as many as twelve variations for the c-d-e-c-d-e rhyme and six for the c-d-c-d-c-d form.

In addition to the series of sonnets in Longfellow's *Divina Commedia*, Keats' *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, and Wordsworth's *London, 1802* are among the favorite sonnets in this Italian class. The last poem is quite as much a tribute to Milton as it is a rebuke of the Englishmen of its author's own day. The urgency of reform is in every line of the octave:

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

SPENSERIAN SONNET

When Wyatt and Surrey returned to England from their Italian sojourn, Wyatt began the writing of sonnets after the Italian manner of octave and sestet; but Surrey experimented with a new form which consisted of three alternately rhyming quatrains and a closing couplet. His *Description of Spring* and *A Vow to Love Faithfully* employ the following rhymes respectively: a-b-a-b; a-b-a-b; a-b-a-b; c-c and a-b-a-b; c-d-c-d; e-f-e-f; g-g. The first poet to bring the quatrain-sonnet into prominence was Edmund Spenser. In *Amoretti*, he uses, however, not the Surreyian quatrain order but a so-called *interlocking* scheme, illustrated in the *b* and *c* rhymes of the following: a-b-a-b; b-c-b-c; c-d-c-d; e-e. This device is demonstrated in Spenser's thirty-fourth sonnet:

Lyke as a ship, that through the Ocean wyde (a)
 By conduct of some star doth make her way, (b)

Whenas a storme hath dimd her trusty guyde, (a)
 Out of her course doth wander far *astray*; (b)
 So I, whose star, that wont with her bright *ray* (b)
 Me to direct, with cloudes is overcast, (c)
 Doe wander now, in darknesse and dismay, (b)
 Through hidden perils round about me *plast*. (c)
 Yet hope I well, that when this storme is *past*, (c)
 My Helice, the lodestar of my lyfe, (d)
 Will shine again, and looke on me at last, (c)
 With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grief, (d)
 Till then I wander carefull, comfortlesse, (e)
 In secret sorrow, and sad pensivenesse. (e)

It will be noticed that one of the quatrain rhymes is carried over into the succeeding quatrain, thus *locking* the quatrains together. This interlocking device is represented in the words *astray*, *ray*, and *plast*, *past*. Despite his quatrain divisions, Spenser's thought construction usually adheres to the octave and sestet arrangement. Accordingly, the conjunction *yet* in the ninth line indicates the turning point in the thought of the quoted sonnet.

SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET

We have already noted that the Earl of Surrey wrote sonnets composed of three quatrains and a couplet, with the rhyme order of a-b-a-b; c-d-c-d; e-f-e-f; g-g. This is the same as that found in the so-called Shakespearean or English sonnet. The name *Shakespearean* is applied to it for the reason that with Shakespeare the form first became prominent and reached its highest perfection. The term *English* is appropriate in that this type of sonnet was not only originated in England but was so largely used by later sonneteers.

The Shakespearean sonnets depart from the interknit Spenserian type, as the following example will show:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds (a)
 Admit impediments. Love is not love (b)
 Which alters when it alteration finds, (a)
 Or bends with the remover to remove: (b)
 O no! it is an ever-fixed mark, (c)
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken; (d)

It is the star to every wandering bark,	(c)
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.	(d)
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks	(e)
Within his bending sickle's compass come;	(f)
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,	(e)
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.	(f)
If this be error and upon me proved,	(g)
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.	(g)

The unit of thought is the quatrain, each having its own set of rhymes, differing from that which precedes or succeeds. In Shakespeare's 116th sonnet, just quoted, each quatrain adds to the definition of true love. Quatrains often present three parallel pictures, as in Shakespeare's seventy-third sonnet or in John Keats' *When I Have Fears*. Frequently they represent three stages in the mood progression, as in Shakespeare's thirtieth sonnet or in John Masefield's *On Growing Old*, which is one of the best that our modern poets have produced:

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;
 My dog and I are old, too old for roving;
 Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,
 Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.
 I take the book and gather to the fire,
 Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute,
 The clock ticks to my heart; a withered wire
 Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
 I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
 Your cornland, nor your hill-land nor your valleys,
 Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
 Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.
 Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
 The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Many Shakespearean sonnets follow the Italian thought division, the break coming in the eighth line. This is noticeable in Shakespeare's twenty-ninth and thirty-third sonnets, in Sir Philip Sidney's *A Farewell*, Sidney Lanier's *Acknowledgment*, Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Pity Me Not*, and especially in Arthur Davison Ficke's *Sonnet* and David Morton's *Old Ships*. These last two even lack the characteristic summarizing in the couplet which

is found in the true Shakespearean type. Whatever the variation may be, the typical Shakespearean sonnet leads up to a couplet, which gives the "final clinching blow."

The vocabulary of praise has many times been exhausted in characterizing Shakespeare's sonnets. Their compactness, their lyrical grandeur, their rhythmical beauty, their imagery, their subdued zeal, and their subtle delving into the miracle of living—these and more are the characteristics attributed to Shakespeare's matchless series.

MILTONIC SONNET

The Miltonic sonnet, as the name implies, was brought into prominence by Milton. In the main, it resembles the Italian sonnet; but in certain of his sonnets Milton disregarded the break between the octave and sestet. He generally combined these two "waves" of thought into one unbroken unit. The result is a more closely knit poem, lending itself more advantageously to a climactic unfolding of the theme. *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont* is a good example of what Milton could do when his passion was stirred. In 1655 the Duke of Savoy ordered the Vandois to leave the country or to renounce their Protestant faith and embrace the Catholic religion. Upon their refusal to comply, a general massacre was instituted. Nothing could have moved Milton more mightily. The lines palpitate with an almost uncontrollable passion:

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones	(a)
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;	(b)
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,	(b)
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,	(a)
Forget not: in thy book record their groans	(a)
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold	(b)
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled	(b)
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans	(a)
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they	(c)
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow	(d)
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway	(c)
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow	(d)
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,	(c)
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.	(d)

SONNET SEQUENCE

Whatever the classification of the sonnet may be, some sonnets are written singly; others are arranged in related groups, called *sequences*. A sonnet sequence is therefore a series of sonnet stanzas joined together by some word or theme which is common to all of them. As a rule, the sonnet sequence tells some story, directly or indirectly, of the author's experience, as in Meredith's *Modern Love* or Leonard's *Two Lives*; or it presents a series of variations on a subject, as in Rossetti's *House of Life* and Rupert Brooke's 1914. Usually the sequences are concerned with the theme of love, which may vary from the impersonal recording of a lady's charm to the very passionate outcry of a poet's own tragic love experience. The fourteen-line sonnet is the dominating form; only infrequently does one find such departures as Thomas Watson's eighteen-line poems in the *Passionate Century of Love* and the sixteen-line variety in George Meredith's *Modern Love*.

The sonnet sequence developed in Italy, almost side by side with the sonnet form itself. Dante's *Vita Nuova* is really a series of sonnets, with prose passages here and there inserted. Thomas Watson's *The Passionate Century of Love*, published in 1582, is partly responsible for the Elizabethan vogue of sonnets; but to Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, 1591, goes the honor of preparing the way more immediately for the many sonnet sequences of the Elizabethan Era. Because of its close adherence to the sonnet form, Sidney's series is rightly considered as being the first sonnet sequence in English.

highly idealized love or friendship for a young man of exceptional parts, and a strong love for a certain "dark woman." The first 126 sonnets are addressed to the young man, whose manly beauty, nobility, and fortune have captivated the poet's fancy. The remaining twenty-eight are written to the woman, who is "pale, dark, treacherous, and stained, but fascinating." Many guesses have been made respecting the identities of these two persons. According to sonnets 135 and 136, the young man's first name was likely *Will* or *William*. The young woman is supposed by many to be Mary Fitton, Maid of Honor to the Queen. Whether the sequence is an indirect disclosure of the poet's own experiences or merely a metrical performance need not concern us so much as the fact that, taken as a whole, they are unmatched for their beauty, originality, and universal significance. Shakespeare has taken in the whole of life in his sixtieth sonnet. It is when reading such lines as these that our critical dispositions gave way to unstinted admiration:

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

John Milton wrote no sonnet sequences; and John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* and William Wordsworth's *The River Duddon* are not convincing examples of sonnet sequences. It is, therefore, to the latter part of the nineteenth century that we must turn for the second great period of activity in sonnet sequences.

At least three remarkable achievements must be noted in this later century. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the*

Portuguese are, next to Shakespeare's series, the best known sequence in the English language. There are many famous love stories in the world: Aucassin and Nicolette, Tristram and Iseult, Launcelot and Guinevere; but none is more beautiful than that of the two poets, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning. When Browning first wrote to Miss Barrett in January, 1845, she was an invalid, confined to her room. As the letters continued to pass back and forth, Love wove a net around the hearts of these two sensitive mortals. Both expressed the intensity and sacredness of their love in poems, Elizabeth Barrett in *The Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1847) and Robert Browning in his 201-line lyric, *One Word More* (1855). Elizabeth Barrett regained health sufficiently to be married to Browning and to go with him to Italy. "One day," Mr. Gosse records, "their breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstairs, while her husband stood at the window watching the street till the table should be cleared. He was presently aware of someone behind him. It was Mrs. Browning, who held his shoulder to prevent his turning to look at her, and at the same time she pushed a packet of papers into the pocket of his coat. She told him to read that and to tear it up if he did not like it; and then she fled again to her own room. It was the manuscripts of the so-called *Portuguese* sonnets. One can imagine the thrill that swept through the poet's heart, after three years of domestic life, to find himself the inspirer of such glowing lines as these:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

George Meredith's *Modern Love* is a reminiscence of his domestic tragedy. In 1849 he had been married to Mrs. Mary Ellen Nicolls, a widow of a naval officer, and nine years his senior. These two otherwise highly commendable people were altogether incompatible when living together. After nine years of constant quarrels and misunderstandings, Mrs. Meredith went to the continent with a Mr. Wallis, an artist. She returned later, deserted and despairing, and died alone in October, 1861. Meredith's pity and remorse found utterance in the tragic *Modern Love*. Algernon Swinburne, by way of defending it against *The Spectator*, made the following statement: "As to execution, take almost any sonnet at random out of this series, and let any man qualified to judge for himself of metre, choice of expression, and splendid language, decide on its claims. And, after all, the test will be unfair, except as regards metrical or pictorial merit; every section of this great progressive poem being connected with the other by links of the finest and most studied workmanship. Take for example, the noble sonnet, beginning:

We saw the swallows gathering in the skies,

A more perfect piece of writing no man alive has ever turned out."

The House of Life by Dante Gabriel Rossetti is a series of 103^v sonnets "on the themes of love and despair and death." They were written at various times and under various moods and circumstances. They lack the continuity that characterizes the other sequences which we have thus far reviewed. *The House of Life* is a "gallery" rather than a single picture, each sonnet being, in the poet's own words, a "moment's monument." With all their fancifulness and wealth of literary artifice, they are clear and unforgettable. The magic of Rossetti's power as a sonneteer is nowhere better seen than in *A Superscription*:

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
 I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
 Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
 Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
 Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
 Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
 Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
 Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.

Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart
 One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
 Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of sighs,—
 Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
 Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
 Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

Houston Peterson has rightly characterized *The House of Life* as "an immortal pilgrimage through the twilight regions of the human soul where there is no truth but beauty and no eloquence but silence."

Among the modern sonnet sequences, William Ellery Leonard's *Two Lives* is the most striking. In its two hundred and odd sonnet-stanzas the author's tragic marital experiences are recorded. His falling in love with his landlord's daughter in Madison, Wisconsin, where he was teaching; their marriage; and his wife's suicide two years later are the chief propelling forces behind the writing of *Two Lives*. We need not be told that the sonnets are based upon actual experience. The evidence is to be found within the poems themselves. Their strongest appeal lies in the deep human emotions that pervade the lines. As the poet proceeds in his lyrical-narrative drama, he painfully alludes to the domestic infelicities which were drawing them both slowly but surely toward the catastrophe:

I found a paper on her chiffonier—
 Manilla wrapping of a scarf or gloves,—
 I read in penciling: "He says, my love's
 More than my tact... a child of fifteen year...
 He says he wishes I were more like sister...
 He says he needs"—and there I saw her stand
 In the door, white-plume on head, her shopping in hand,
 Smiles on her lips. She came to me... I kissed her...
 She marked... Her face fell on my shoulder; so
 We clung together. "I'm so sorry, friend,
 You found my scrawl."—"I love you, child."—"I know."—
 "Forgive."—"Twas for my good... and there's an end."
 The rest was silence—the embrace and kiss
 Of love with love upon the precipice.

Thus there passed a season of gloom, worry, and love, until the demon of Death ushered in the inevitable hour:

An instant—leapt—leapt—followed. (In the hall
 I heard the click of key on upper floor—
 Strength left my knees) I could but crawl and crawl—
 And trembled groping to her chamber door—
 I heard the rattling of a box—a knife?
 Razor at throat?—the panel—shall I break?
 Perhaps it's nothing—I grip the knob—"My wife!
 O open! Open for your husband's sake!"
 She opened ... with a vision on her face,
 And hands uplifted to immortal things,
 And past me flew ... upon her toilet case
 An emptied glass with foam in awful rings,
 And a green bottle labelled with the red
 Letters that shrieked upon me, "She is dead!"

QUESTIONS

1. Make a study of George Meredith's *Modern Love* and William Ellery Leonard's *Two Lives*, as records of personal tragedies.
2. Contrast Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* with Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* with respect to the love experiences depicted.
3. Report on the variations in technique in the following sonnets:

Milton: *On His Blindness*

Wordsworth: *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic*

Shelley: *Ozymandias*

Keats: *Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art!*

Millay: *I Shall Go Back*

Ficke: *Sonnet*

4. What themes come within the province of the sonnet?
 The following will be suggestive in this connection.

Shakespeare: *Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea*

Gray: *On the Death of Mr. Richard West*

Wordsworth: *It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free*

Hunt: *To the Grasshopper and the Cricket*

Byron: *Sonnet on Chillon*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: *If thou must love me*

Arnold: *Quiet Work*

Christina G. Rossetti: *The World*

5. Wherein lies the popularity of the following sonnets:
 Masfield: *Firelight*
 Robinson: *Souvenir*
 Millay: *What Lips My Lips Have Kissed*
 Santayana: *As in the midst of battle there is room*
 Van Dyke: *Work*
6. Write out in prose the thought contained in Shakespeare's sixty-fifth sonnet, beginning "Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea."
7. How does Shakespeare characterize true love in his 116th sonnet?
8. Explain, fully, what Wordsworth means by the title of his sonnet, *The World Is Too Much With Us*.
9. Make a careful study of Milton's *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*. Explain in detail why this is such a masterful poem, both from the standpoint of thought and of technique.
10. What does Keats mean by "realms of gold," "goodly states and kingdoms," and "Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold" in his sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*? Explain the simile which the poet uses in the sestet.
11. What fears does Keats entertain in *When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be*?
12. The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* is the expression of love from a woman's point of view. In what respects do these sonnets differ from those which a man might have written?
13. According to Arnold's *Quiet Work*, what is the ideal way to work?
14. Characterize Longfellow's attitude toward Dante and his great epic poem as set forth in *Divina Commedia*.
15. How does Masfield characterize life in *I Never See the Red Rose Crown the Year*?

EXAMPLES

English Sonnets:

Sir Thomas Wyatt: *The Lover Compareth His State to a Ship in Perilous Storm Tossed on the Sea*

The Lover Having Dreamed of Enjoying of His Love, etc.
A Renouncing of Love

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: Description of Spring
Complaint of a Lover Rebuked

A Complaint by Night of the Lover Not Beloved

Edmund Spenser: "Happy ye leaves! when as those lily hands"
(From *Amoretti*)

"Lyke as a ship, that through the Ocean wyde" (From
Amoretti)

"Men call you fayer, and you doe credit it" (From *Amoretti*)

"Joy of my life! full oft for loving you" (From *Amoretti*)

Sir Walter Raleigh: A Vision upon this Conceit of the Faerie
Queene

Sir Philip Sidney: "Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of
peace" (From *Astrophel and Stella*)

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou clim'st the skies!"
(From *Astrophel and Stella*)

"Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance" (From
Astrophel and Stella)

"Stella, since thou so right a princess art" (From *Astrophel
and Stella*)

A Farewell

Samuel Daniel: "Beauty, sweet Love, is like the morning dew"
(From *Delia*)

"Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night" (From *Delia*)

"Let others sing of Knights and Paladins" (From *Delia*)

Michael Drayton: "Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and
part." (From *Idea*)

William Shakespeare: "When I consider everything that grows"
"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

"When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes"

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought"

"Full many a glorious morning have I seen"

"Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore"

"Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea"

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead"

"That time of year thou mayst in me behold"

"From you have I been absent in the spring"

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds" (Note: The
foregoing sonnets are taken from his *Sonnets*)

John Milton: On His Being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three

When the Assault was Intended to the City

To the Lord General Cromwell

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

On His Blindness

On His Deceased Wife

John Donne: "Death, be not proud, though some have called thee"

William Drummond: "I know that all beneath the moon decays"

"Dear wood, and you, sweet solitary place"

Thomas Gray: Sonnet: On the death of Mr. Richard West

William Cowper: To Mrs. Unwin

William Wordsworth: Composed upon Westminster Bridge

"It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free"

On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic

To Toussaint L'Ouverture

Near Dover, September, 1802

London, 1802

The World Is Too Much With Us

Scorn Not the Sonnet

Mutability

Inside the King's College Chapel, Cambridge

Surprised by Joy

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: To Nature

Robert Southey: "A wrinkled, crabbed man they picture thee"

Leigh Hunt: To the Grasshopper and the Cricket

George Gordon, Lord Byron: Sonnet on Chillon

Percy Bysshe Shelley: Ozymandias

John Keats: On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Two Sonnets on Fame

To Sleep

On the Grasshopper and the Cricket

"Bright Star, would I were steadfast as thou art!"

"When I have fears that I may cease to be"

Thomas Hood: Silence

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Comfort

To George Sand

- "Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart!" (From *Sonnets from the Portuguese*)
 "If thou must love me" (From *Sonnets from the Portuguese*)
 "How do I love thee?" (From *Sonnets from the Portuguese*)
 Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Montenegro
 William Bell Scott: The Universe Void
 Matthew Arnold: Quiet Work
 Shakespeare
 To an Independent Preacher
 The Austerity of Poetry
 Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Sonnet (From *The House of Life*)
 Love Sight (From *The House of Life*)
 Silent Moon (From *The House of Life*)
 The Choice (Three sonnets from *The House of Life*)
 Lost Days (From *The House of Life*)
 A Superscription (From *The House of Life*)
 The Dark Glass (From *The House of Life*)
 On Refusal of Aid Between Nations
 George Meredith: Internal Harmony
 Lucifer in Starlight
 Christina Rossetti: The World
 A Pause
 Theodore Watts-Dunton: The Sonnet's Voice
 A Dream
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: On the Russian Persecution of the Jews
 Hope and Fear
 On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot
 Andrew Lang: The Odyssey
 Rupert Brooke: The Soldier
 The Hill
 Thomas Hardy: Revulsion
 Embarcation
 She, to Him
 Paul Hamilton: Laocoön
 Robert Bridges: Hector in Hades
 Melancholia
 "The very names of things beloved are dear"
 John Masfield: It May Be So With Us

Roses Are Beauty
 "I never see the red rose crown the year"
 On Growing Old
 Firelight
 Forget
 Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: The Conscript
 The Paisley Shawl
 Tenants

American Sonnets:

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Nature
 Holidays
 Divina Commedia (six sonnets)
 Edgar Allan Poe: To Science
 James Russell Lowell: Love
 Thomas Bailey Aldrich: England
 George Henry Boker: To England (six parts)
 To America (two parts)
 Richard Watson Gilder: The Sonnet
 The Life-Mask of Abraham Lincoln
 Richard Hovey: A Dream of Sappho
 Richard Henry Stoddard: 'Poems of the Orient'
 Sidney Lanier: Acknowledgment
 George Santayana: "I would I might forget that I am I"
 "As in the midst of battle there is room"
 Edwin Arlington Robinson: The Sheaves
 Monadnock Through the Trees
 Souvenir
 Firelight
 Karma A.
 Edna St. Vincent Millay: "Here is a wound that never will
 heal"
 I Shall Go Back
 What Lips My Lips Have Kissed
 Pity Me Not
 "I know I am but summer to your Heart"
 Henry Van Dyke: Work
 Louis Untermeyer: Voices
 Arthur Davison Ficke: Sonnet
 David Morton: Old Ships

Elinor Wylie: August
George Sterling: The Black Vulture
The Night of Gods
Ezra Pound: A Virginal
Lizette W. Reese: Tears

SONNET SEQUENCES

English Sequences:

Sir Philip Sidney: Astrophel and Stella
Edmund Spenser: Amoretti
William Shakespeare: Sonnets
Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Sonnets from the Portuguese
George Meredith: Modern Love
Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The House of Life
Rupert Brooke: 1914

American Sequences:

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Divina Commedia
William Ellery Leonard: Two Lives

CHAPTER XII

SONG

A LYRIC poem which is sung is called a *song*. It represents a union of two arts: poetry and music. As such, it is the oldest type of literature that we have. Out of the dim past the song comes to us in the form of *folk-songs*, where the works of both the anonymous musician and the poet are blended into one emotional rendition. The debt that modern music and poetry owe to the folk-songs cannot easily be over-estimated.

The perfect union of poetry and music gives us a powerful vehicle for the conveying of emotional moods. We have, first of all, the poem itself, which guides the singer or listener into a very definite trend of thought. It leads him to associate the music with appropriate images; and it does this in a language heightened by sensuous beauty, strong suggestion, and pictorial energy. The music, on the other hand, intensifies that which the words suggest by instilling additional feeling. We have two complementary activities uniting to give an emotion the most stirring appeal during the few moments of its duration. As the words of many old songs are almost flat and meaningless without music, so music without words often liberates but a vague and weak emotion.

It is difficult to blend these two arts ideally in any one song. The chief reason lies in the fact that the air and the lyric are usually written by different individuals. Occasionally we find men like Rouget de Lisle in France and Stephen C. Foster in America who furnished both the lyric and melody for the *Marseillaise* and *Old Folks at Home* respectively. More often a musician composes the melody for another's lyric, as did Sidney Homer for Stevenson's *Requiem*: or a poet composes a poem for a melody already well known, as did Mrs. Julia Ward Howe for the tune now associated with *The Battle Hymn of the Re-*

public and Robert Burns for the well-known air of *Auld Lang Syne*. While many other examples of the magic blending of music could be mentioned, like *Loch Lomond*, *Trees*, and *To Celia*, still numerous exquisite lyrics and as many excellent melodies are awaiting the arrival of that genius who will supply a suitable complement, whether it be poetry or music.

HISTORY

Song-lyrics may be divided into two classes, *secular* and *sacred*. In England we find the first great outburst of secular songs in the time of Queen Elizabeth, at which time the dramatists were writing these lyrical pieces for inclusion in their dramatic compositions. For pure lyrical distillations of an unreflective variety these Elizabethan songs have never been surpassed. Shakespeare's *Hark, Hark, the Lark* and *Mistress Mine*, Ben Jonson's *Hymn to Diana*, and John Fletcher's *Weep No More* are but a few of the many fairylike creations.

Since the eighteenth century was, in the main, unfavorable to song, it was not until the opening years of the Romantic period that the secular song again came into its own. Robert Burns is the most important of the song-writers of this period. Who does not know his *Comin' Thro' the Rye* and *Sweet Afton*? Sir Walter Scott's *Hunting Song* and *Brignall Banks* are almost equally well known. Thomas Moore's *Oft in the Stilly Night* is still popular; and his *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls* has survived the intervening century.

With Tennyson begins another period of song-writing activity, although of a less unreflective and spontaneous nature. Tennyson himself was the most important of those who wrote during the Victorian Era. *The Bugle Song* and *Sweet and Low* have been favorites since the time of their appearance. Swinburne's *Chorus from Atalanta in Calydon* and Rudyard Kipling's *On the Road to Mandalay* likewise possess permanent artistic excellencies.

In America the secular song flourished most happily during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when such men as Sidney Lanier and Stephen Collins Foster were writing.

The second class of songs, namely the sacred songs, are as old as the religion of man. Among the Hebrew people the song

reached a high state of lyrical perfection. The forty-second psalm is illustrative of the religious fervor that pervades the songs of the Hebrew poets. The first stanza and chorus follows:

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
 So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
 When shall I come and appear before God?
 My tears have been my meat day and night,
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
 These things I remember,
 And pour out my soul within me,
 How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God
 With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.

Chorus:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
 And why art thou disquieted within me?
 Hope thou in God:
 For I shall yet praise him,
 Who is the health of my countenance,
 And my God.

(From Moulton's *The Modern Reader's Bible*)

The medieval church produced some excellent hymns. Beginning with Fortunatus (530-609) and the Venerable Bede (637-735) the medieval hymnody reached its height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The most noteworthy of these Latin hymns are *Veni Creator Spiritus*, *Dies Irae*, *The Alleluiaic Sequence*, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, *Mater Speciosa*, and *Stabat Mater*. From this time onward there has been a steady stream of hymns flowing into the sea of English hymnody, especially so in the eighteenth century when Thomas Ken, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, John Fawcett, Augustus Toplady, Edward Perronet, and William Cowper were writing.

CHARACTERISTICS

From the foregoing remarks the chief qualities of the song become apparent. It must be born of true passion. Its power lies not in its intellectualism but in its feeling, as witness one of Shakespeare's best compositions, *Who is Silvia?*

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness,
And being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

Shakespeare could pack his lines with profound and comprehensive ideas when he so desired—of that his sonnets and plays are convincing witnesses—but he understood the genius of the song-lyrics so well that he could also turn to the lighter but not less emotional thoughts. Love, adventure, nature, and home life may find expression in the song. Whatever the theme, it must be simply and attractively presented. While the entire gamut of moods from the gayest to the gravest may be sounded, the song is happiest when set in the mean, that is, pensive and moderately gay or grave. Whatever the thought, it should be uttered suggestively and spontaneously. False sentiment has absolutely no place in the true song.

If the thought in the song-lyric is to make its greatest appeal, it must be expressed in suitable verse form. With simplicity of thought must go a simple and regular metrical arrangement. It must be brief, and the movement dare not lag. The stanzas should follow some simple rhyming scheme; and at the end of each line the sense should preferably come to a natural pause. Refrains are often used, principally in the older songs. About the entire song there should be a natural melody; the word-rendering should be such as to convey the idea of music. The words should possess those qualities of sound adapted to the singing voice, preference being shown to the liquids, *l*, *m*, *n*, *ng*.

r, and to the open vowels, like *i*, *o*, etc. Notice the selection of vowels in Tennyson's *The Bugle Song*:

The splendour falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

SECULAR LYRICS

Space does not permit a consideration of the many varieties of the secular song, such as folk-songs, musical comedies, operas, madrigals, and epithalamiums. *Convivial* songs have interested man from time immemorial. Where ale-drinking peoples are found, there *convivial* songs are also wont to be. Beginning with William Stevenson's *Back and Side; Go Bare!*, England and America have made various contributions to the convivial stock, chief among them John Dyer's *Down Among the Dead Men*, Holmes' *On Lending a Punch Bowl*, and Masfield's *Captain Stratton's Fancy*.

Both England and America lay claim to some spirited *patriotic* songs. These express a communal or national feeling. As would naturally be inferred, the most stirring pieces are written in war-time, when patriotism is at its highest pitch. Curiously, and yet naturally enough, the names of great poets are rarely attached to them, Robert Burns' *Scots Wha Hae* being an ex-

ception. England's national anthem, *God Save the King*, was written, presumably, by an unimportant writer, Henry Carey. *Bannockburn* and *Ye Mariners of England* were also the work of minor authors, Michael Bruce and Thomas Campbell respectively.

The well-known patriotic songs of America date from 1814. In that year a Baltimore lawyer, Francis Scott Key, wrote *The Star-Spangled Banner* during the bombardment of Fort McHenry. The air adopted by Key was one that had been composed for a song, *To Anacreon in Heaven*, which appeared in a minor English opera of the eighteenth century. In 1832, Samuel F. Smith, a Baptist minister, wrote *America*, oddly enough, to the same tune as *God Save the King*. *My Maryland*, the so-called "Marseillaise of the Confederacy," was written in 1861 by James R. Randall, a native of Baltimore, but at the time a teacher in Poydras College, Louisiana. Other patriotic songs like *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Dixie*, and *John Brown's Body* are likewise associated with the Civil War period. Many of the war-songs, once popular with the soldier of the sixties, have almost been forgotten. Among these are *Lorena*, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, *The Cavaliers of Dixie*, and *Little Mac*.

By far the greater number of secular songs are devoted to the theme of *love*. In this field no poet has ever equaled Robert Burns in the variety and finish of his animated creations. Many song lovers think immediately of such spontaneous outbursts as *Highland Mary* or *Mary Morison*. Burns was saturated with the old Scotch folk-songs and folk-tunes. He revised and recast some of the old songs, and borrowed other Scotch tunes for his original productions. Herein lies perhaps the secret of his power. In addition to Burns' songs, Lady John Scott's *Annie Laurie* is another favorite Scottish love song. Unfortunately, in America there is a dearth of good love songs, scarcely a single one rating high in both the musical and poetic arts.

SACRED SONGS

Considering the thousands of hymns that have been set to music, we shall find only a comparatively few that have poetic merit. Generally, the hymns are written by clergymen, who are

more concerned with teaching than with literary form. Now and then, as in the case of Cardinal Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light*, there is a happy union of religious fervor and poetic ability in the same individual.

In 1923 the *Étude*, a musical magazine of Philadelphia, sent out a questionnaire to determine which were the best-loved hymns. There were 32,000 men and women who expressed their preferences. *Abide With Me* received the highest number of votes. Henry Francis Lyte, its author, devoted the better part of his life to hard work for the poor in the slums of London. Having contracted tuberculosis, he was given a charge on the shores of Torbay, England. Although his health was failing fast, he enjoyed a short period of rest. On the eve of his departure for Southern Europe for the winter, he gave the manuscript of *Abide With Me* to his family; it was "written literally with a dying hand." The following day he started out on his journey, but got only as far as Nice, where he was attacked with influenza. Death immediately followed. This hymn, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* once remarked, "is pensive, contemplative, and prayerful. It is not militant, and it is neither theological nor dogmatic. It expresses the aspirations of a fervent piety." The lines of it are as follows:

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens. Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see!
Oh, thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee—
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

The other hymns, in the order of their preference, were *Nearer, My God to Thee*; *Lead, Kindly Light*; *Rock of Ages*; *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*; *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*; *Just as I Am Without One Plea*; *Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me*; and *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*. Some years following this foregoing contest *The Methodist Times* (London) conducted a survey among its readers for the purpose of determining the most frequently used hymns in the British church services. *Our Blest Redeemer*, by Miss Aufer, and *For the Beauty of the Earth*, by John Pierpont, took first and second places respectively.

From the standpoint of literary excellence, Cardinal Newman's hymn, *Lead, Kindly Light*, is most meritorious of our mention here. It was written while Newman was becalmed for a week on a sailing vessel between Corsica and Sardinia in June, 1833. The well-known lines follow:

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home—
 Lead Thou me on!

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
 The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
 Shouldst lead me on.

I loved to choose and see my path; but now
 Lead Thou me on!

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
 Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power has blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on,

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone;

And with the morn those angel faces smile
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

QUESTIONS

1. Look up in some encyclopedia the term *madrigal*. Bring an example to class and be prepared to show wherein it fulfills the requirements of your definition. The madrigals of William of Hawthornden will be found helpful in this study.
2. Bring to class several examples of modern popular songs. Consider them as lyrics and as music. Wherein lie their weakness and strength?
3. Read *Song* by Adelaide Crapsey, *Night Song at Amalfi* by Sara Teasdale, and *Songs from Cyprus* by Hilda Doolittle in Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry*. In what respects are these similar and dissimilar to William Shakespeare's *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *O, Mistress Mine*, and *Fear No More the Heat of the Sun*?
4. With the help of some encyclopedia, characterize the *epithalamium*. Apply these characteristics to one of the following: Edmund Spenser's *Epithalamion*, Ben Jonson's *Epithalamion* (from *The Masque of Hymen*), Thomas Heywood's *The Epithalamion*, or Robert Herrick's *An Epithalamie to Sir Thomas Southwell and His Lady*.
5. Why does a poor hymn have more chances of survival than a poor secular song?
6. Look up definitions of the term, *folk-song*. Discuss *John Brown's Body* and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* as examples of this type. What relationship to the ballad do you note here?
7. After reading the accounts in an encyclopedia, bring to class definitions of *carol*, *oratorio*, *anthem*, and *cantata*. Would you classify them as sacred or secular songs? Cite examples of each.
8. Enumerate the many qualities that the song and the ballad have in common. As a basis for your study, read Burns' *Highland Mary*, *Sweet Afton*, and the popular ballads *Bonny Barbara Allan* and *The Cruel Brother*.
9. Make a study of the qualities which go to make Lady John Scott's *Annie Laurie* and Foster's *Old Folks at Home* such successful popular songs. Make a list of typical rules.
10. Cardinal Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light* is generally re-

garded as the greatest hymn of modern times. After studying the hymn carefully, try to account for this opinion.

EXAMPLES

SECULAR SONGS

English Songs:

Anonymous: Cuckoo Song

William Stevenson: Back and Side; Go Bare! (From *Gammer Gurton's Needle*)

John Lyly: Spring's Welcome (From *Alexander and Campaspe*)

Thomas Lodge: Rosalind's Madrigal (From *Rosalind*)

Robert Greene: The Shepherd's Wife's Song (From *The Mourning Garment*)

William Shakespeare: Autolycus' Song (From *A Winter's Tale*)

Hark, Hark, the Lark (From *Cymbeline*)

Mistress Mine (From *Twelfth Night*)

Under the Greenwood Tree (From *As You Like It*)

What is love? (From *Twelfth Night*)

When Icicles Hang by the Wall (From *Love's Labor's Lost*)

Who is Silvia? (From *Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

Thomas Nash: Spring (From *Summer's Last Will and Testament*)

Thomas Dekker: Catch, A (From *The Shoemaker's Holiday*)

Art Thou Poor (From *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissell*)

John Donne: Song (Sweetest love, I do not go)

Ben Jonson: Hymn to Diana (From *Cynthia's Revels*)

Simplex Munditiis (From *Epicoene* or *The Silent Woman*)
Song to Celia

John Fletcher: Aspatia's Song (From *The Maid's Tragedy*)

Robert Herrick: The Mad Maid's Song

Thomas Carew: Song (Ask me no more where Jove bestows)

William D'Avenant: Song (The lark now leaves his wat'ry nest)

Edmund Waller: Go Lovely Rose

John Milton: Sabrina Fair (From *Comus*)

Henry Carey: God Save the King

- Sally in Our Alley
 John Dyer: Down Among the Dead Men
 Oliver Goldsmith: Song (When lovely woman stoops to folly)
 (From *The Vicar of Wakefield*)
 James Thomson: Rule, Britannia
 Michael Bruce: Bannockburn
 William Blake: Nurse's Song (From *Songs of Innocence*)
 Robert Burns: Auld Lang Syne
 Comin' Thro' the Rye
 Duncan Gray
 Highland Mary
 Mary Morison
 O, Wert Thou In the Cauld Blast
 Red, Red Rose, A
 Scots Wha Hae
 Song: Green Grow the Rashes
 Sweet Afton
 Yet Flowery Banks
 Sir Walter Scott: Ave Marie
 Hail to the Chief (From *The Lady of the Lake*)
 Hunting Song
 Where Shall the Lover Rest (From *Marmion*)
 Thomas Moore: Oft in the Stilly Night
 'Tis the Last Rose of Summer
 The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls
 Thomas Love Peacock: War-Song of Dinas Vawr, The (From
 The Misfortunes of Elphin)
 Lord Byron: Song of the Greek Poet (From *Don Juan*)
 Stanzas for Music
 Percy Bysshe Shelley: Chorus from Hellas
 Lady John Scott: Annie Laurie
 Thomas Lovell Beddoes: Song (From *The Fool's Tragedy*)
 Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Bugle Song (From *The Princess*)
 Crossing the Bar
 Sweet and Low (From *The Princess*)
 Robert Browning: Cavalier Tunes: Boot and Saddle
 Give a Rouse
 Marching Along
 The Year's at the Spring (From *Pippa Passes*)

Charles Kingsley: The Old Song (From *The Water Babies*)

Christina Rossetti: Song (When I am dead, my dearest)

William Morris: Love is Enough Though the World Be
A-Waning (From *Love is Enough*)

The Nymph's Song to Hylas (From *The Life and Death
of Jason*)

Algernon Charles Swinburne: Chorus (From *Atalanta in
Calydon*)

Robert Louis Stevenson: Requiem

Francis Bourdillon: The Night Has a Thousand Eyes

Anonymous: John Brown

Rudyard Kipling: Gipsy Trail, The
On the Road to Mandalay

William Butler Yeats: The Song of the Faeries (From *The
Land of Heart's Desire*)

John Masefield: Captain Stratton's Fancy
Sea-Fever

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson: Song

Alfred Noyes: Thomas Dekker's Song (From *Tales of the
Mermaid Tavern*)

American Songs:

Joseph Hopkinson: Hail, Columbia (O. W. Holmes added
three stanzas in 1887)

Francis Scott Key: The Star-Spangled Banner

Samuel Woodworth: The Old Oaken Bucket

John Howard Payne: Home, Sweet Home

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Concord Hymn

Samuel Francis Smith: America

Oliver Wendell Holmes: On Lending a Punch Bowl

Julia Ward Howe: Battle Hymn of the Republic

Stephen Collins Foster: Old Folks at Home

My Old Kentucky Home

James Ryder Randall: My Maryland

Sidney Lanier: Marsh Song—At Sunset

William Vaughn Moody: Pandora's Song (From *The Fire
Bringer*)

Adelaide Crapsey: Song

Sara Teasdale: Winter Night Song

SACRED SONGS

English Hymns:

Joseph Addison: The Spacious Firmament on High

Isaac Watts: Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Philip Doddridge: Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve

Charles Wesley: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Edward Perronet: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

William Cowper: Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

O for a Closer Walk with God

There is a Fountain Filled with Blood

John Fawcett: Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Augustus Montague Toplady: Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Reginald Heber: Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty

Henry Francis Lyte: Abide With Me

John Henry Newman: Lead, Kindly Light

Sarah Fowler Adams: Nearer, My God, to Thee

Frederick Henry Hedge: A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

(Translation of Martin Luther's *Ein Feste burg ist Unser Gott*)

Ray Palmer: My Faith Looks up to Thee

Edmund Hamilton Sears: It Came upon a Midnight Clear

Frederick William Faber: Faith of Our Fathers

Pilgrims of the Night

Adelaide Anne Proctor: The Lost Chord

Sabine Baring-Gould: Now the Day is Over

Samuel John Stone: The Church's One Foundation

Mary Ann Lathbury: Day is Dying in the West

American Hymns:

John Greenleaf Whittier: Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

(From *Brewing of Soma*)

CHAPTER XIII

LIGHT VERSE

POETRY cannot always concern itself with serious thoughts and mighty issues. Life has both its humorous and its serious aspects. We find that poets lavish their skill upon a whimsical as well as upon a sober theme. We treasure the solemn poems of Goldsmith, Holmes, and Kipling, for example; but we also delight in their mirthful *Parson Gray*, *Dorothy Q.*, and *My Rival*. There are times when our mood refuses to climb to the austere heights of *Paradise Lost* and *In Memoriam*. At such moments the fun-provoking whimsicalities of human beings have for us a particular fascination, and a gay portrait of an ephemeral lover charms our passing fancy.

HISTORY

If we seek for a beginning of light verse, we shall have to go back to the Greek comedies of Aristophanes, the Roman satires of Juvenal, and especially the odes of the Roman poet, Horace. The general tone of light verse owes much to the odes of Horace. They possess, in the main, those qualities which characterize the light verse of today: a carefree spirit, clever and sprightly banter, interest in polite society and feminine beauty, and a keen pleasure in association with men and women of mental acumen. Since the seventeenth century many writers in England and America have translated the odes of Horace. Even today we find such a poet as Louis Untermeyer engaged in revealing the charm of these old verses. His *Including Horace* contains many admirable renditions of Horace's excellent odes.

France likewise influenced the trend of light verse in England, especially that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Before their revolution of 1789-1795 the French developed an almost meticulous social instinct and a keen appreciation of the social graces. The French salon was a veritable mother of light verse. Here society and literature were brought together

on friendly and almost equal terms, the one complementing the other. As in the romance, so in light verse, France furnished her English friends with models by which their social life might find adequate expression. Some of the early writers of light verse, like Matthew Prior, lived in France for a time and were very directly influenced by French verse forms.

In English literature the first successful examples of light verse appeared in the seventeenth century. Charles Sackville's *Song Written At Sea*, 1665, according to Edmund Goese, is the first specimen of *vers de société*, one form of light verse, to appear in the English language. If we consider light verse in its broadest aspects, William Shakespeare's *Sigh No More, Ladies* would come even earlier. The works of other writers in the century, like George Wither, Sir John Suckling, and Robert Herrick, also stand as early examples of this type of verse. In the eighteenth century Matthew Prior, Alexander Pope, John Gay, William Cowper, and Oliver Goldsmith took a lively interest in the writing of light verse; and in the nineteenth century Lord Byron, Walter Savage Landor, Charles Stuart Calverley, Frederick Locker-Lampson, William Makepeace Thackeray, Winthrop Mackworth Praed, Thomas Hood, Rudyard Kipling, Austin Dobson, and Algernon Charles Swinburne were unusually active in composing this form of verse. In America the best work has come from Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Henry Cuyler Bunner, Bret Harte, Walter Learned, and John Godfrey Saxe. The best of the contemporary writers would include Franklin P. Adams, Christopher Morley, Bert Leston Taylor, and Louis Untermeyer.

CHARACTERISTICS

Light verse is not the poetry of deep thought or of lofty enthusiasm. It does not have the intensity of Shelley's *Ode To the West Wind* nor the passionate love of the anonymous *Helen of Kirkconnell*. The following lines from the latter poem,

I wad I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnell lea!

are too serious for light verse.

Though commonly lyrical in nature, light verse never seeks to portray an earnest or tragic mood. It is interested, rather, in the less serious conditions of civilized society. It delights, for example, in the playful fancies of the lovers that are portrayed in Aldrich's *Palabras Cariñosas*.

Good-night! I have to say good-night
To such a host of peerless things!
Good-night unto the slender hand
All queenly with its weight of rings;
Good-night to fond, uplifted eyes,
Good-night to chestnut braids of hair,
Good-night unto the perfect mouth,
And all the sweetness nestled there—
The snowy hand detains me, then
I'll have to say good-night again!

But there will come a time, my love,
When, if I read our stars aright,
I shall not linger by this porch
With my farewells. Till then, good-night!
You wish the time were now? And I.
You do not blush to wish it so?
You would have blushed yourself to death
To own so much a year ago—
What, both these snowy hands! ah, then
I'll have to say good-night again!

While the theme of light verse may be trifling, the treatment permits no end of ingenuity. Grace, smoothness, deftness, and precision are essential qualities. The art which is employed in creating good light verse is therefore not inferior to that which characterizes graver subjects. Though much otherwise technically perfect light verse is marred by the poet's desire to compliment, it has the advantage of dealing with common subjects in an easily comprehensible manner. Add to this the satisfaction which comes to the reader through an airy, sparkling poem, and the difference between light verse and, let us say, an epic is more likely to be one of kind rather than of degree. The reader is admiring the shrub instead of the oak, the sea shell rather than the mountainous wave.

The poet who undertakes the writing of light verse must be

a man of the social world, a *lover* of society as such, as well as a dreamer behind closed doors. Many great poets, like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson, were ill suited for the writing of light verse. They were too profoundly serious to take upon themselves the depiction of ephemeral moods. The poet of light verse must not be intolerant of folly. He should be good-natured enough to perceive the human features concealed behind the glare and tinsel of affectation and conventionalism. The variableness of human nature should have an insatiable fascination for him. Feminine characters, to him, should be more attractive and entertaining than the masculine. The drawing-room and the theater box should be the dominion of him who desires to write in the lighter vein. This type of verse enjoys *today* and does not entertain seriously the possible turn of fortune *tomorrow*, nor regard with fear and misgiving the errors of *yesterday*. It should be noted, however, that light verse, however jovial, is not destitute of serious elements. Only in so far as the reader sees between the lines a reflection of the more sober realities of life will he truly enjoy light verse; for a mere dainty morsel of metrical dexterity would never satisfy him. Above all, the writer of light verse must have literary culture of the most exacting nature, discriminating artistic feelings, and an alert susceptibility to the activities of social groups.

Light verse is neither restricted in form, nor limited in subject matter, except that it is generally social in nature. The form may be that of a letter, song, toast, epitaph, epigram, French Form, nonsense verse, limerick, parody, and other varieties of verse which have as their main purpose amusement rather than a stirring of our emotional and intellectual natures. Because of the varied nature of light verse, it is impossible to select a title that includes all. *Social Verse*, *Vers de Société*, *Society Verse*, *Familiar Verse*, *Gentle Verse*, and *Patrician Rhymes* have all been employed. None of these seem to be as applicable as that of *Light Verse*. Under this general heading we shall consider *society verse*, *nonsense verse*, *parody*, *limericks*, *epitaphs*, and *epigrams*.

SOCIETY VERSE

Society verse refers not necessarily to that verse which represents so-called "high" society, but to that which "reflects a type

of society which has at its best the charm of elegance, gayety, and superficial propriety." We refer, furthermore, to that type of verse which is characterized by high finish, lightness of touch, good humor, and by an interest in good society.

The thought in society verse is briefly presented; for it dare not even border upon tedium. The theme, though seemingly unimportant, must be intelligently and deftly handled. There should be no scrutiny into basic principles, or into the real significance of appearances. These must be dispersed by the spirit of polite comedy and by a gay and indulgent feeling. The world in society verse is a light and airy one. Pathos has no place. Care must, however, be exercised lest the sentiment degenerate into farce, burlesque, or gross exaggeration.

The style is a chief consideration. The rhyme should be natural and easy, as in Locker-Lampson's *To My Grandmother*:

This relative of mine,
Was she seventy-and-nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen
How she looked at seventeen
As a bride.
Beneath a summer tree,
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste;
What an arm!... what a waist
For an arm!

The rhythm should be animated and sparkling. Notice the exhilarating effect that the swing of the lines in the first two stanzas of Mary Mapes Dodge's *The Minuet* have upon us:

Grandma told me all about it,
Told me so I couldn't doubt it,
How she danced—my Grandma danced!—
Long ago.
How she held her pretty head,
How her dainty skirt she spread,
Turning out her pretty toes;
How she slowly leaned and rose—
Long ago.

Grandma's hair was bright and sunny;
 Dimpled cheeks, too—ah, how funny!
 Really quite a pretty girl,
 Long ago.

Bless her! why, she wears a cap,
 Grandma does, and takes a nap
 Every single day; and yet
 Grandma danced the minuet
 Long ago.

If society verse is to give delight, the tone should be semi-conversational, gallant and buoyant, fanciful and playful. Crudity and heaviness find no place. There must be ease of phrasing, gracefulness of expression, and a sense of high polish. A suggestion of artifice is not amiss, neither a good-humored maliciousness, as in two stanzas from Lewis Carroll's *My Fancy*:

I painted her a gushing thing,
 With years perhaps a score;
 I little thought to find they were
 At least a dozen more;
 My fancy gave her eyes of blue,
 A curly, auburn head;
 I came to find the blue a green,
 The auburn turned to red.

.

She has the bear's ethereal grace,
 The bland hyena's laugh,
 The footstep of the elephant,
 The neck of the giraffe.
 I love her still, believe me,
 Though my heart its passion hides;
 "She is all my fancy painted her,"
 But, oh, how much besides!

Austin Dobson's *Twelve Good Rules* have often been mentioned in a discussion of style: (1) Never be vulgar, (2) Avoid slang and puns, (3) Avoid inversions, (4) Be sparing of long words, (5) Be colloquial but not commonplace, (6) Choose the lightest and brightest of measures, (7) Let the rhymes be frequent but not forced, (8) Let them be rigorously exact to the

ear, (9) Be as witty as you like, (10) Be serious by accident, (11) Be pathetic with the greatest discretion, and (12) Never ask if the writer of these rules has observed them himself.

As might be expected, the dividing line between the serious lyric and society verse is not always a clear one. There are certain poems frequently classified as society verse which are not entirely so. Lowell's *Auf Wiedersehn*, for example, too tenderly voices the love of years gone by to be classified as pure society verse. There is likewise something of a serious lyrical strain in Thomas Dunn English's *Kate Vane*:

I see you now when years have passed,
And find you full as fair;
Time has not soiled your purity,
Nor marked your face with care.
I love you as I did before
Yea! deeper, stronger, better, more.
What! are you in my arms, Kate Vane?
Dear love, we both are young again!

One, Two, Three, by Henry Cuyler Bunner, though often regarded as light verse, has an element of pathos which borders upon the tragic. As we read about the "thin little fellow" playing "Hide-and-Go-Seek" with "an old, old lady," we are moved to pity:

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy who was half past three;
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.
.
.
.
It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be—
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.
.
.
.
And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple-tree—
This old, old, old, old lady,
And the boy with the lame little knee—
This dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half past three.

Holmes' *The Last Leaf* gives much the same impression. A poem which contains a stanza serious enough to exact from Abraham Lincoln the comment of "inexpressibly touching" is likely to be more of a serious than of a light nature. Lincoln's favorite stanza is as follows:

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
 In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
 On the tomb.

The same serious note runs through Stedman's *Cousin Lucrece* and Thackeray's *At the Church Gate*. We must observe, however, that all of the foregoing examples have a certain kinship to light verse. The difficulty of classification is not so serious in the case of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, which is too long; nor of Cowper's narrative, *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*, where the fun-making is too bold and too boisterous.

Society verse deals with a variety of themes and moods. A number of the poems set forth some phase of childhood. As early as 1704 Matthew Prior wrote *To a Child of Quality, Five Years Old*. The best in this field are Austin Dobson's *To a Child* and George W. Cable's *An Editor's Firstborn*. The first of these foregoing poems is written with such delightful reservation that I cannot refrain from quoting it:

How shall I sing you, Child, for whom
 So many lyres are strung;
Or how the only tone assume
 That fits a Maid so young?

What rocks there are on either hand!
 Suppose—'tis on the cards—
You should grow up with quite a grand
 Platonic hate for bards!

How shall I then be shamed, undone,
 For ah! with what a scorn
Your eyes must greet that luckless One
 Who rhymed you, newly born,—

Who o'er your "helpless cradle" bent
 His idle verse to turn;
 And twanged his tiresome instrument
 Above your unconcern!

Nay,—let my words be so discreet,
 That, keeping Chance in view,
 Whatever after fate you meet
 A part may still be true.

Let others wish you mere good looks,—
 Your sex is always fair;
 Or to be writ in Fortune's books,—
 She's rich who has to spare:

I wish you but a heart that's kind,
 A head that's sound and clear;
 (Yet let the heart be not too blind,
 The head not too severe!)

A joy of life, a frank delight;
 A not-too-large desire;
 And—if you fail to find a Knight—
 At least . . . a trusty squire.

In certain instances the metrical qualities of a poem in this class are its chief attraction. This is especially true of Locker-Lampson's *My Mistress' Boots*, where the light, skipping rhythm suggests the patter of a lady's feet as she walks hurriedly over the floor:

They nearly strike me dumb,—
 I tremble when they come
 Pit-a-pat:
 This palpitatio means
 These boots are Geraldine's—
 Think of that!

Society verse may express a semi-satiric or partly-cynical idea. It may do this so long as the satire or cynicism leaves no smart. In the seventeenth century we find several poets writing in this vein: Robert Herrick's *To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time*; George Wither's *Shall I, Wasting in Despair?*; and Sir John Suckling's *Why So Pale and Wan?*, with the characteristic ending:

If of herself she will not love,
 Nothing can make her;
 The devil take her.

Since the seventeenth century many other poems have appeared of a like nature, chief among them Oliver Herford's *Truth*, Thomas Moore's *When Love Is Kind* and *The Time I've Lost in Wooing*, James J. Roche's *If*, and Walter Learned's *Time's Revenges*. Thomas Moore merges closely upon hatred in *When I Loved You*, instanced in such a stanza as this:

Thus, whether we're on or we're off,
 Some witchery seems to await you;
 To love you is pleasant enough,
 And oh! 't is delicious to hate you!

The attractiveness of many pieces resides in the unexpected turn which the thought takes. In *She Is Not Fair*, by Franklin P. Adams, the surprise is reserved for the very last line:

What makes me love her, then? say you,
 For such a maid is not my wont?
 Love her! What makes you think I do?
 I don't.

as it is in Gilbert's *To Phoebe*:

Words like these, outpouring sadly,
 You'd perpetually hear,
 If I loved you, fondly, madly;—
 But I do not, Phoebe, dear.

The same element of surprise is to be found in Charles Graham Halpine's *Feminine Arithmetic* and John Godfrey Saxe's *Early Rising*.

Learned's *In Explanation* and Aldrich's *Palabras Cariñosas* (*Endearing Words*) owe their great popularity to the highly suggestive nature of their lines. The first of these poems should be read with due regard to all the punctuation marks:

Her lips were so near
 That—what else could I do?
 You'll be angry, I fear.
 But her lips were so near—
 Well, I can't make it clear,

Or explain it to you.
But—her lips were so near
That—what else could I do?

Those lively pieces which win a high place by the good wholesome fun which sparkles through every line are a joy to all readers. None has quite the mirth and unexpected humor of the anonymous *The Modern Belle*. Note the curious association of certain ideas, for which the reader is unprepared, but which provoke a happy and effective reaction:

She sits in a fashionable parlor,
And rocks in her easy chair;
She is clad in silks and satins,
And jewels are in her hair;
She winks and giggles and simpers,
And simpers and giggles and winks;
And though she talks but little,
'Tis a good deal more than she thinks.

She lies abed in the morning
Till nearly the hour of noon,
Then comes down snapping and snarling
Because she was called so soon;
Her hair is still in papers,
Her cheeks still fresh with paint,—
Remains of her last night's blushes,
Before she intended to faint.

She dotes upon men unshaven,
And men with "flowing hair";
She's eloquent over mustaches,
They give such a foreign air,
She talks of Italian music,
And falls in love with the moon;
And, if a mouse were to meet her,
She would sink away in a swoon.

Her feet are so very little,
Her hands are so very white,
Her jewels so very heavy,
And her head so very light;
Her color is made of cosmetics

(Though this she will never own),
 Her body is mostly of cotton,
 Her heart is wholly of stone.

She falls in love with a fellow
 Who swells with a foreign air;
 He marries her for her money,
 She marries him for his hair!
 One of the very best matches,—
 Both are well-mated in life;
 She's got a fool for a husband,
 He's got a fool for a wife!

Rivalry in love is a common subject for society verse. The last stanza in Dobson's *Dora Versus Rose* is cleverly conceived. The same theme in Prior's *The Female Phaeton* and Kipling's *My Rival* is also delicately handled. Kipling achieves a striking effect with the words *seventeen* and *forty-nine* in the latter poem. The young girl of seventeen almost despairs of her inability to compete with the more experienced woman of forty-nine; but the youthful maid is finally encouraged by the idea that

...even She must older grow
 And end Her dancing days;
 She can't go on forever so
 At concerts, balls, and plays!
 One ray of priceless hope I see
 Before my footsteps shine:
 Just think that she'll be eighty-one
 When I am forty-nine.

Among those poems which present the more general aspects of life and love, none are more commendable than Locker-Lampson's *Vanity Fair* and *To My Grandmother*, Calverley's *Companions*, Praed's *School and School Fellows* and *The Belle of the Ball-Room*. From the last this exquisite reminiscence is taken:

She sketched; the vale, the wood, the beach,
 Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading:
 She botanized; I envied each
 Young blossom in her boudoir fading:

She warbled Handel; it was grand;
She made the Catalani jealous:
She touched the organ; I could stand
For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

She kept an album, too, at home,
Well filled with all an album's glories;
Paintings of butterflies, and Rome,
Patterns for trimmings, Persian stories;
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo,
Fierce odes to Famine and to Slaughter,
And autographs of Prince LeBoo,
And recipes for elder-water.

And she was flattered, worshipped, bored;
Her steps were watched, her dress was noted;
Her poodle dog was quite adored,
Her sayings were extremely quoted;
She laughed, and every heart was glad,
As if the taxes were abolished;
She frowned, and every look was sad,
As if the Opera were demolished.

She smiled on many, just for fun,—
I knew that there was nothing in it;
I was the first—the only one
Her heart had thought of for a minute.—
I knew it, for she told me so,
In phrase which was divinely moulded;
She wrote a charming hand,—and oh!
How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves;—
A little glow, a little shiver,
A rose-bud, and a pair of gloves,
And 'Fly not yet'—upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted,
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows,—and then we parted.

We parted; months and months rolled by;
We met again four summers after:

Our parting was all sob and sigh;
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter:
For in my heart's most secret cell
There had been many other lodgers;
And she was not the ball-room's Belle,
But only—Mrs. Something Rogers!

NONSENSE VERSE

Nonsense verse is not an altogether unworthy member of the large body of artistic creations. Thomas De Quincey long ago remarked that "none but a man of extraordinary talent can write first-rate nonsense." Carolyn Wells goes a step further by saying that "none but a man of extraordinary taste can appreciate first-rate nonsense." "Talking sense," according to William Pitt, "is not so exacting a test of a man's intellectual ability as that of talking nonsense; everybody can do the former; but very few, the latter." This would seem to be borne out by the results of a competition sponsored some decades ago by the London Academy. Despite the large number of contestants, no really fine specimens of nonsense verse were contributed.

The technique of good nonsense verse is just as exacting as that of more serious poetry. If the thought is an incongruous or topsy-turvy one, the words and metrical arrangement must suit these conditions. The writer must exercise restraint at every turn. Humor should not become too blatant; and fancifulness should not degenerate into meaningless absurdities or wild, incoherent mixtures. The coveted effect is that of so co-ordinating sense and technique as to result in a piece of shrewd, delightful nonsense.

Nonsense verse varies greatly in form and theme. There is a variation in length from Gelett Burgess's quatrain, *The Purple Cow*, to Edward Lear's 110-line *The Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo*. Nonsense verse overlaps with other poetic types. Sonnets, songs, ballads, French Forms, and elegies are some of the forms used by writers of nonsense verse. Misspelling is a device frequently employed; and new words are unhesitatingly coined whenever necessary, such as *ombliferous*, *thingumbob*, *pipslipsily*, *froddering*, *guggledom*, *himmeltanious*, and *swiffling*. The story may be ridiculous, as in Gilbert's *The Yarn of the Nancy Bell*. We

find versified words without any apparent meaning, as in Carroll's *Jabberwocky*; or an absurd or ridiculous idea may be treated with cold seriousness, as in Lear's *The Pobble Who Has No Toes*. Often a free use of alliteration results in a fun-provoking bit of verse, as in James C. Bayles' *In the Gloaming*:

The twilight twiles in the vernal vale,
In adumbration of azure awe,
And I listlessly list in my swallow-tail
To the limpet licking his limber jaw,
And it's o for the sound of the daffodil,
For the dry distillings of prawn and prout,
When hope hops high and a heather hill
Is a dear delight and a darksome doubt.

The play upon difficult words characterizes the anonymous *Lines To Miss Florence Huntington*, the concluding stanzas of which follow:

Let others sing loudly of Saco,
Of Quoddy, and Tattamagouche,
Of Kennebecasis, and Quaco,
Of Merigonishe, and Buctouche,
Of Nashwaak, and Magaguadavique,
Or Memmerimammericook,—
There's none like the Skoodoowabskooksis,
Excepting the Skoodoowabskook!

Oliver Goldsmith, among others, loved to employ obvious repetition, as the first and last stanzas from *Parson Gray* will verify:

A quiet home had Parson Gray,
Secluded in a vale;
His daughters all were feminine,
And all his sons were male.
.
.
.
.
.
As faithful characters he drew
As mortals ever saw;
But ah! poor parson! when he died,
His breath he could not draw!

Writers of nonsense verse, for the most part, are men of good sense, many of them masters in the more serious fields of crea-

tive art. A roll call would disclose such names as Milton, Goldsmith, Lamb, Thackeray, Longfellow, Holmes, Moore, Praed, Quiller-Couch, and Stevenson.

It is not surprising therefore to find that behind some of the funniest sayings often lies profound knowledge and deep thought. Goldsmith's *An Elegy* is a good example:

Good people all, with one accord,
Lament for Madam Blaize,
Who never wanted a good word—
From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom pass'd her door,
And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor—
Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighborhood to please
With manners wondrous winning;
And never follow'd wicked ways—
Unless when she was sinning.

At church, in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumber'd in her pew—
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux and more;
The King himself has follow'd her—
When she has walk'd before.

But now, her wealth and finery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all;
The doctors found, when she was dead—
Her last disorder mortal.

Let us lament, in sorrow sore,
For Kent Street well may say,
That had she lived a twelvemonth more—
She had not died today.

Any study of nonsense verse should be sure to include the accredited leaders in this type of verse: Thomas Hood, Edward

Lear, Lewis Carroll (Charles L. Dodgson), and William S. Gilbert for the English writers; and Gelett Burgess and Oliver Herford for the American authors.

PARODY

A thoughtful reading of the best verse parodies will convince us that, as a type, they occupy a worth-while place in the realm of literature. Isaac D'Israeli maintained that "far from converting virtue into paradox and degrading truth by ridicule, parody will only strike at what is chimerical and false; it is not a piece of buffoonery so much as a critical exposition." Christopher Stone takes much the same attitude in his excellent booklet on *Parody*: "Ridicule is society's most effective means of curing inelasticity. It explodes the pompous, convicts the well-meaning eccentric, cools the fanatical, and prevents the incompetent from achieving success."

It appears then that the parodist must understand thoroughly his original. He must be awake to its attractions as well as its detractions. His criticisms must, however, be expressed in a good-natured spirit and in an elegant verse form; for it is more his purpose "to amuse intelligently and cleverly" than to instruct. It should be observed, however, that not all parodies are written with a criticism of the original in mind. Many are composed in a playful mood, with mere entertainment as a motive. It is doubtful, for example, whether the anonymous writer of *Toothache* had any intentions of criticizing Shakespeare's soliloquy of Hamlet; or whether Clara W. Vail did more than merely amuse herself in her *Bed During Exams*, a parody on Stevenson's *Bed in Summer*:

I used to go to bed at night,
And only worked when day was light.
But now 't is quite the other way,
I never get to bed till day.

I look up from my work and see
The morning light shine in on me,
And listen to the warning knell—
The tinkle of the rising bell.

And does there not seem cause to weep
When I should like so much to sleep,
I have to sing this mournful lay,
I cannot get to bed till day?

It follows that the requirements for the true parodist, according to Carolyn Wells, are "an exact mental balance, a fine sense of proportion and relative values, good humor, refinement, and unerring taste. Self-control and self-restraint are also needed; a parodist may go to the very edge, but he must not fall over."

A parody may mimic the style, the thought of its original, or it may imitate both of these. Calverley's *The Cock and the Bull* is written in imitation of Browning's style in *The Ring and the Book*. Calverley likewise mimicked the use of refrains in the pre-Raphaelite ballads in his *Ballad*. Who does not immediately recognize the meter of Poe's *The Bells* in the anonymous *The Amateur Flute*:

Hear the flutter with his flute,
Silver flutel
Oh, what a world of wailing is awakened by its toot!
How it demi-semi quavers
On the maddened air of night!
And defieth all endeavors
To escape the sound or sigh
Of the flute, flute, flute,
With its tootle, tootle, toot; etc.

The greatest number of parodies are chiefly concerned with the thought or sense of the originals. This is true of Thackeray's *The Sorrows of Werther*, Swinburne's *The Higher Pantheism in a Nutshell*, the anonymous *Home Truths from Abroad*, Phoebe Cary's *Jacob*, Kipling's *Jane Smith* and Bret Harte's *Mrs. Judge Jenkins*, the last four lines of which will recall the well-known ending of Whittier's *Maud Muller*:

If, of all words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are, "It might have been,"

More sad are these we daily see:
"It is, but hadn't ought to be."

The anonymous writer of *The Modern Hiawatha* was thinking of both the style and sense of Longfellow's *Hiawatha* when he wrote the following:

He killed the noble Mudjokivis.
Of the skin he made him mittens,
Made them with the fur side inside,
Made them with the skin side outside.
He, to get the warm side inside,
Put the inside skin side outside;
He, to get the cold side outside,
Put the warm side fur side inside.
That's why he put the fur side inside,
Why he put the skin side outside,
Why he turned them inside outside.

When, among those poets mostly parodied, we notice the names of Tennyson, Gray, Poe, Browning, Walt Whitman, Shakespeare, Spenser, Longfellow, Whittier, and Swinburne, we are led to conclude that in a very real measure parody is an index to popularity; and when, among the best writers of parody, we observe the names of such artists as Swinburne, Thackeray, Bret Harte, Calverley, Max Beerbohm, and Kipling, we shall likewise see that as a type, parody has attracted some of the most virile and creative literary minds.

EPITAPH

The epitaph is ordinarily associated with the tomb or monument. In poetry, it is sometimes written for the occasion of burial, but more often for the purpose of commenting upon the dead. It generally expresses in a few lines the merits or faults of the deceased. Strangely enough, there are certain verse epitaphs which are funny instead of grave. Take for example one found on a tombstone in Worcester, Mass.:

Mammy and I together lived
Just two years and a half,
She went first, I followed next—
The cow before the calf.

or another discovered in Burlington, N. J.:

Here lies the body of Mary Ann Lowder,
She burst while drinking a seidlitz powder.
Called from this world to her heavenly rest,
She should have waited till it effervesced.

When we read the foregoing, we are not in the cemeterial state of mind. These are extreme examples, perhaps; but they illustrate well the type of epitaphs which come within the class of light verse.

A number of epitaphs have a strong satirical flavor. A famous one in this class is John Wilmot's (Earl of Rochester) *On Charles II*:

Here lies our sovereign Lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing
Nor ever did a wise one.

George Macdonald's *Epitaph* has been a favorite for many generations:

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde:
Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God,
As I wad do were I Lord God
And ye were Martin Elginbrodde.

This approaches more nearly the class of serious epitaphs, but still not close enough to prevent us from smiling as we read it. Of a more definitely light-verse order is the one found on Claude du Vall's stone in Covent Garden Church:

Here lies du Vall; reader, if male thou art,
Look to thy purse; if female, to thy heart.

and the odd couplet on Gay's tomb in Westminster:

Life is a jest and all things show it;
I thought so once and now I know it.

Robert Burns wrote more than a score of epitaphs. Some of these reflect the poet's sympathy and commendation; others like the *Epitaph for Mr. W. Cruickshank*,

Honest Will to Heaven's away,
 And mony shall lament him;
 His faut's they a' in Latin lay,
 In English nane e'er kent them.

(*faut's* means faults; *kent*, knew)

and the *Epitaph for William Michie*,

Here lie Willie Michie's banes,
 O Satan, when ye tak him,
 Gie him the schulin o' your weans,
 For clever deils he'll mak them!

(*schulin* means schooling; *weans*, children)

are gay and satiric.

EPIGRAM

An epigram in verse is a short poem which treats pointedly and compactly a single thought or event. Not all epigrams are light in nature. Frequently they appear as parts of long and serious poems. When, however, the epigram does take a humorous turn, it may be classified as light verse. The thought usually takes an ingenious turn and is wittily and tersely presented. It is marked by "intellectual conciseness" and by "economy of style." Coleridge's definition of the epigram is interesting at this point:

What is an Epigram? A dwarfish whole;
 Its body brevity, and wit its soul.

The rhymed epigram came into England with the Elizabethans in the sixteenth century and reached its greatest popularity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No English writers have been more prolific in this field than Robert Herrick and Walter Savage Landor. *Upon a Painted Gentlewoman* is one of Herrick's gayer verses:

Men say y'are fair, and fair ye are, 'tis true;
 But, hark! we praise the painter now, not you.

English and American literatures both contain excellent specimens of the epigram. S. Bishop wrote the following on choosing a lover. It is entitled *The Maiden's Choice*:

A fool and knave with different views,
 For Julia's hand apply:
 The knave, to mend his fortune sues,
 The fool, to please his eye.

Ask you, how Julia will behave?
 Depend on't for a rule,
 If she's a fool, she'll wed the knave—
 If she's a knave, the fool.

Woman's Will, by John Godfrey Saxe, is admirably phrased:

Men, dying, make their wills; but wives
 Escape a work so sad;
 Why should they make what all their lives
 The gentle dames have had?

How shrewdly the endless perversities of human nature are suggested in Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *The Difference*.

Some weep because they part,
 And languish broken-hearted,
 And others—O my heart!—
 Because they never parted.

To William Erskine goes the credit for the following:

This house, where once a lawyer dwelt,
 Is now a smith's. Alas!
 How rapidly the iron age
 Succeeds the age of brass!

We close with Matthew Prior's humorous distinction in his *Epigram*:

Sir, I admit your general rule,
 That every poet is a fool:
 But you yourself may serve to show it,
 That every fool is not a poet.

LIMERICK

The limerick is one of the few forms to have originated in America. In 1719 *Songs for the Nursery, or, Mother Goose Melo-*

dies for Children made its appearance in Boston, the work of Elizabeth Goose. In this publication the early forms and stages of the limerick are represented, from that of

Hickory, dickory, dock!
 The mouse ran up the clock.
 The clock struck one—
 The mouse ran down,
Hickory, dickory, dock!

where the first line is repeated as the fifth, to the following where a new terminal line is introduced:

There was an old soldier of Bister
 Went walking one day with his sister,
 When a cow at one poke
 Tossed her into an oak,
Before the old gentleman missed her.

The form of the limerick usually follows this latter arrangement.

The rhyme scheme of the limerick is a-a-b-b-a. Lines one, two, and five have three feet each; and lines three and four have each two feet. The anapestic movement dominates. The *a* rhymes may be either single as in Anthony Euwer's,

As a beauty I am not a <i>star</i> ,	(a)
There are others more handsome, by <i>far</i> .	(a)
But my face, I don't mind it,	(b)
For I am behind it,	(b)
It's the people in front get the <i>jar!</i>	(a)

or double, as in

There was an old man of *Calcutta*
 Who had an unfortunate *stutter*.
 'I would like,' he once said,
 'Some b-b-b-bread,
 And some b-b-b-b-b-butter.'

The writing of limericks has proved an interesting pastime for many notable men. Dean Inge of St. Paul's, Dean Welldon of Durham, Rudyard Kipling, J. St. Joe Strachey, Seymour Hicks, William S. Gilbert, Edward Lear, and George du

Maurier are among those who turned at odd moments to this form of composition. The last three men, more than any others, were responsible for the popularization of the limerick. Rossetti wrote at least twenty-four of them; and Stevenson was also known to have written a number of limericks, among them the whimsical,

There was an old man of the Cape,
Who made himself trousers of tape.
When asked, "Do they tear?"
He replied, "Here and there,
But they're perfectly splendid for shape."

There are numerous excellent limericks that one might quote. Ian Hay prefers the one associated with Nantucket:

There was an old man of Nantucket,
Who kept all his cash in a bucket;
But his daughter, named Nan,
Ran away with a man.
And as for the bucket—Nantucket!

During a protracted sea voyage from the Hook of Holland to Harwick, Gordon Selfridge was strongly reminded of the following:

There was a young maid of Ostend,
Who swore she'd hold out to the end;
But alas! half way over,
'Twixt Calais and over,
She did what she didn't intend.

QUESTIONS

Carolyn Wells' *A Vers De Société Anthology*, *A Parody Anthology*, *A Nonsense Anthology* (Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers), and Stearns and Fuess' *The Little Book of Society Verse* (Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers) contain most of the poems mentioned in the exercises that follow:

1. Make a list of fifteen themes that may be treated in society verse.

2. Bring to class specimens of light verse which you have seen in issues of current periodicals.
3. Explain very clearly why Robert Burns' *Ae Fond Kiss* and Arthur Hugh Clough's *Life Is Struggle* are not selections of society verse.
4. Make a study of Locker-Lampson's *To My Grandmother*. What types of feet, other than the iambus, are used? Point out instances of eye-rhymes. What effect do the two short lines in each stanza produce? Is the poet's attitude on *Time* in the sixth stanza characteristic of the serious lyric? What especially is there in the third and eighth stanzas which one does not find in serious poetry?
5. What three kinds of meters are used in Austin Dobson's *A Dead Letter*? What is there unusual about the three-foot lines? Why is the letter in Part II in keeping with the mood of society verse? What claims has Part III to classification as a serious lyric? What lines in this part of the poem are of the nature of society verse?
6. Why is the mood in each of the following poems that of society verse? In what respects are these moods different?
William Cowper: *To Miss Creuze, On Her Birthday*
Thomas Moore: *To Fanny*
Robert Herrick: *Upon His Gray Haires*
Thomas Hood: *The Bachelor's Dream*
7. Would you classify Edmund Waller's, *Go, Lovely Rose!* and *To Phyllis* as society verse? Be prepared to support your point of view.
8. Wherein lies the humor in each of the following examples of nonsense verse:
Thomas Hood: *Faithless Nelly Gray*
Lewis Carroll: *My Fancy*
Oliver Herford: *Metaphysics*
Anonymous: *Lines by a Medium*
Anonymous: *There was a Monkey*
Gelett Burgess: *The Invisible Bridge*
9. What is there about Arnold's *Requiescat*, Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, and Emerson's *Terminus* which dissuades poets from parodying them?
10. Bring to class an original parody on one of the following:
Longfellow: *The Psalm of Life*

Hood: *The Song of the Shirt*

Scott: *Jock of Hazeldean*

Blake: *Introduction to Songs of Innocence*

Burns: *Auld Lang Syne*

Wordsworth: *I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud*

11. What does Kipling parody in *Jane Smith*?
What in Tennyson does Swinburne criticize in *The Higher Pantheism in a Nutshell*?
12. Do the anonymous *The Village Choir* and Hood's *The Cannibal Flea* contain any criticisms of the poems which they parody?
13. Read the opening lines in Browning's *The Ring and the Book* and then Calverley's *The Cock and the Bull*. What can you say about parody as an art?
14. What in Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West* does Anthony C. Deane parody in *Jack and Jill*?
15. Write a four- or five-line epitaph on some eccentric friend.
16. What portion of Stevenson's *Requiem* is an epitaph?
17. Write a short epigram on some phase of college life.
18. Write a limerick, employing as a first line one of the following:
 - (a) There was a young lady of France
 - (b) There was a big boy from Kentucky
 - (c) There was a young farmer named Izzy
 - (d) There was a smart student named Beecher
 - (e) There was an old man with a mule
 - (f) There once was a man with a beard
19. Characterize Oliver Wendell Holmes as a writer of society verse. Read in this connection
Contentment
Dorothy Q.
My Aunt
To an Insect
20. What part does narrative play in the following?
 Thomas Hood: *Faithless Nelly Gray*
 Edward Lear: *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat*
 William M. Thackeray: *Little Billee*
 Lewis Carroll: *The Hunting of the Snark*
 William Schwenck Gilbert: *The Yarn of the Nancy Bell*

EXAMPLES

SOCIETY VERSE

(Most of the examples here listed may be found in Stearns and Fuess: *The Little Book of Society Verse* and in Brander Matthews' *American Familiar Verse*.)

English:

William Shakespeare: Sigh No More, Ladies

John Donne: Song (Go and catch a falling star)

Thomas Campion: Vain Men, Whose Follies Make a God of Love

Never Love Unless You Can

George Wither: Shall I, Wasting in Despair

Robert Herrick: Upon His Gray Haires

Sir John Suckling: Out Upon It, I Have Loved

Why So Pale and Wan

Matthew Prior: Female Phaeton, The Merchant, The

William Cowper: On Her Birthday

Rose, The

To Miss Creuze, on Her Birthday

Thomas Campbell: Florine

Walter Savage Landor: Dirce

Thomas Moore: To Fanny

The Time I've Lost in Wooing

When I Loved You

When Love Is Kind

James Henry Leigh Hunt: Jenny Kiss'd Me When We Met

Winthrop Mackworth Praed: The Belle of the Ball-Room

Good-Night to the Season

School and School Fellows

Frederick Locker-Lampson: Old Letters

My Mistress's Boots

Terrible Infant, A

To My Grandmother

Vanity Fair

Peter Remsen Strong: Awful

Charles Stuart Calverley: Companions

Thomas Hood: The Bachelor's Dream

Algernon Charles Swinburne: An Interlude

Austin Dobson: Avis

Dora Versus Rose

Incognita

To a Child

Walter Learned: Eheu! Fugaces

In Explanation

The Prime of Life

Time's Revenges

To Critics

Alfred Edward Housman: Oh, See How Thick the Goldcup
Flowers

Oliver Herford: Truth

Rudyard Kipling: My Rival

American:

Royall Tyler: My Mistresses

Philip Freneau: To a Caty-Did

Franklin P. Adams: The Rich Man

She Is Not Fair

Nathaniel Parker Willis: Love in a Cottage

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Catawba Wine

Oliver Wendell Holmes: Contentment

Dorothy Q.

• My Aunt

To an Insect

John Godfrey Saxe: Early Rising

The Heart and the Liver

The Mourner A La Mode

My Familiar

The Superfluous Man

Benjamin Franklin: Paper

James Russell Lowell: Auf Wiedersehn

The Petition

Within and Without

Charles Graham Halpine: Feminine Arithmetic

Quakerdom

Anonymous: The Modern Belle

Charles Henry Webb: Dictum Sapienti

The King and the Pope

Thomas Bailey Aldrich: In an Atelier
 Nocturne
 Palabras Cariñosas
 Mary Mapes Dodge: The Minuet
 Bret Harte: Her Letter
 Mary Ainge De Vere: Friend and Lover
 George Washington Cable: An Editor's First-Born
 James Jeffrey Roche: If
 Eugene Field: Thirty-Nine
 Marc Cook: Growing Old
 Henry Cuyler Bunner: Magdalena
 She was a Beauty
 Edward Sanford Martin: To a Child
 Sam Walter Foss: The Ideal Husband to His Wife
 Frank Dempster Sherman: A Rhyme for Priscilla
 Bert Leston Taylor: Canopus
 Arthur Guiterman: Fashion
 Josephine Preston Peabody: Vanity, Saith the Preacher
 Sara Teasdale: The Look
 Louis Untermeyer: Book Review
 Carolyn Wells: The Spelling Lesson

NONSENSE VERSE

(Most of the examples here listed may be found in Carolyn Wells' *A Nonsense Anthology*.)

English:

Anonymous: Sonnet Found in a Deserted Mad House
 The Nyum-Nyum
 'T is Sweet to Roam
 The Moon Is Up
 My Dream
 Moorlands of the Not
 Alone
 Lines By a Medium
 There Was a Monkey
 Thy Heart
 A Chronicle
 Russian and Turk

- Lines To Miss Florence Huntingdon
 The Autumn Leaves
 In the Night
 Little Willie
 Oliver Goldsmith: An Elegy
 Parson Gray
 Thomas Moore: Nonsense
 Winthrop Mackworth Praed: A Song of Impossibilities
 William Makepeace Thackeray: Little Billee
 Edward Lear: The Dong with a Luminous Nose
 The Owl and the Pussy-Cat
 The Pobble Who Has No Toes
 The Jumbies
 Charles Stuart Calverley: Companions
 Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson): Jabberwocky
 My Fancy
 The Walrus and the Carpenter
 The Hunting of the Snark
 Father William (From *Alice in Wonderland*)
 Thomas Hood: Faithless Nelly Gray
 William Schwenck Gilbert: The Story of Prince Agib
 The Yarn of the Nancy Bell
 Oliver Herford: Metaphysics
 The Hen
 The Cow
 The Chimpanzee
 Gelett Burgess: Abstrosophy
 The Purple Cow
 The Invisible Bridge
 My Feet
 Hilaire Belloc: The Python

American:

- Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Height of the Ridiculous
 Bret Harte: Plain Language from Truthful James
 Swiss Air
 Irwin Russell: Nebuchadnezzar
 George Thomas Lanigan: A Threnody
 James Whitcomb Riley: The Lugubrious Whing-Whang

PARODIES

(Most of the parodies here listed may be found in Carolyn Wells' *A Parody Anthology*.)

English:

Anonymous: Wordsworthian Reminiscence (On William Wordsworth's moralizing tendencies)

The Bachelor's Soliloquy (On Shakespeare's Hamlet's Soliloquy)

Toothache

On Wordsworth (On Wordsworth's *Lucy*, Part II)

The Ancient Mariner (The Wedding Guest's Version of the Affair from His Point of View) (On S. T. Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*)

Song of the Sheet (On Thomas Hood's *The Song of the Shirt*)

Mutton (On R. W. Emerson's *Brahma*)

The Modern Hiawatha (On H. W. Longfellow's *Hiawatha*)

Higher (On H. W. Longfellow's *Excelsior*)

The Village Choir (On Alfred Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade*)

Home Truths From Abroad (On Browning's *Home Thoughts From Abroad*)

William M. Thackeray: The Sorrows of Werther (On Goethe's *The Sorrows of Werther*)

Mortimer Collins: If (On A. C. Swinburne's *A Match*)

Charles Stuart Calverley: The Cock and the Bull (On Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book*)

Ballad (On the pre-Raphaelite balladists—use of refrains as in William Morris' *Two Red Roses Across the Moon*)

Lewis Carroll: The Bat (On Jane Taylor's *The Star*)

Atalanta in Camden-Town (On A. C. Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*)

Algernon Charles Swinburne: The Higher Pantheism in a Nutshell (On Tennyson's *The Higher Pantheism*)

Oliver Herford: Song (On Robert Herrick's *To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time*)

Rudyard Kipling: Jane Smith (On Wordsworth's *Lucy*, Part III)

The Flight of the Bucket (On Robert Browning's *The Flight of the Duchess*)

American:

Phoebe Cary: When Lovely Woman (On Oliver Goldsmith's *When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly*)

Jacob (On Wordsworth's *Lucy*, Part II)

The Day is Done (On H. W. Longfellow's *Hiawatha*)

Bayard Taylor: Ode On a Jar of Pickles (On John Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*)

Cimabue (On D. G. Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*)

Bret Harte: Mrs. Judge Jenkins (On J. G. Whittier's *Maud Muller*)

EPIGRAMS AND EPITAPHS

English:

John Harrington: Of Treason

Henry Wotton: On the Death of Sir Albertus and Lady Morton

Robert Herrick: Upon a Painted Gentlewoman

Henry Aldrich: The Five Reasons for Drinking

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: On Charles II

Matthew Prior: Epitaph on Himself

Epigram

Written in a Lady's *Milton*

Jane Hughes Brereton: On Beau Nash's Picture, which once stood between the Busts of Newton and Pope

John Gay: My Own Epitaph

Alexander Pope: Epitaph Intended for Sir Isaac Newton

Epitaph on Mr. Gay

You Beat Your Pate

On Mrs. Tofts

On a Certain Lady at Court

I am His Highness' Dog at Kew

Samuel Johnson: Burlesque

Samuel Bishop: The Maiden's Choice

Robert Burns: Epitaph on John Dove

Epitaph on a Henpecked Squire

Epitaph for Mr. W. Cruickshank

Epitaph for William Michie

Francis Jeffrey: On Peter Robinson

George Gordon, Lord Byron: Epitaph for William Pitt
Epigram (From the French of Rulhieres)

The World is a Bundle of Hay

On My Thirty-third Birthday

Coventry Patmore: The Kiss

George Macdonald: Epitaph

William Erskine: "This house, where once a lawyer dwelt"

William Watson: Epitaph for a Dog

Hilaire Belloc: On Lady Poltagrue, A Public Peril

American:

John Godfrey Saxe: Woman's Will

Thomas Bailey Aldrich: The Difference

Pessimistic Poets' Points of View

Willard Wattles: Creeds

FRENCH FORMS

IN every generation there are to be found those who take a special delight in highly technical poetic forms. Strict verse patterns present a challenge to the artist; and the curious effects achieved are such as delight both authors and readers. To certain lyric patterns which originated in France, we give the name of *French Forms*. Though there is an undeniable artificiality and formality about these, in the hands of the skillful artist they not infrequently enter the realm of great poetry.

A consideration of French Forms takes us back to the time of the *jongleurs* or *troubadours* in southern France. There in the district of Provence, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the germ of the later French Forms developed. Among the numerous forms with which the Provençal poets experimented were the *vers*, *canzo*, *sirvente*, *tenso*, *alba*, *serena*, *pastorella*, *ballade* (not the same as the later ballade), and the *sestina*. Other intricate forms were also here evolved, beside which such later creations like the *rondel* and *villanelle* appear strikingly elementary.

These early Provençal forms left their impress upon the *rondel*, *rondeau*, *triolet*, *villanelle*, *ballade*, and *chant royal* that were subsequently to be developed in northern France. Among the early masters of these forms in France ought to be mentioned Charles d'Orleans for the *rondel*, François Villon for the *ballade*, Jean Passerat for the *villanelle*, and Vincent Voiture for the *rondeau*. Between the fifteenth and the end of the seventeenth century French Forms came into great vogue. Something of their popularity may be learned from the fact that thousands of ballades and other types are preserved in manuscript in the Royal French Library.

These French Forms have attracted English poets ever since the day of Chaucer, who himself experimented with the ballade in *The Truth Shall Make You Free* and *The Complaint of*

Chaucer to His Empty Purse. John Gower in the fourteenth century, John Shirley in the fifteenth century, Edmund Spenser and Drummond of Hawthornden in the sixteenth century were all interested in one form or another. However it was not until 1872 that a definite revival of interest in French Forms began. In that year Andrew Lang published his *Lays and Lyrics of Old France*. To what extent this publication influenced the other writers cannot be ascertained. This much is certain: that with the advent of the foregoing volume we have a steady stream of these forms flowing into the various poetic collections. Especially to Andrew Lang, Austin Dobson, Edmund Gosse, William E. Henley, and John Payne must go the honor of reviving the interest of English writers in French Forms. The number of writers, after 1877, rapidly increased, until now, in addition to the foregoing writers, we can list such masters in the field as Brander Matthews, Henry Cuyler Bunner, Frank D. Sherman, Edwin A. Robinson, and Louis Untermeyer. So popular have the French Forms become that at the present time hardly a month passes but that in some magazine or paper representatives of these forms appear. The most popular are the ballade and rondeau; the triolet and villanelle are also held in favor by many people.

CHARACTERISTICS

In the main, the French Forms are well adapted for the expression of light, gay sentiment, although instances of their use for sober thought frequently arise. Like all lyric poetry, these forms insist upon precision of expression, harmonious sound, and perfect rhythm. More than the common run of lyric poetry, they further demand adherence to some special set of mechanical principles, which are the dismay of all but the most versatile writers. The end to be achieved is clearly that of so ordering the poems that the intricate form is not apparent to the reader. Where is the general reader that would suspect the rondeau form in John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders field.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If you break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

There are certain rules which are common to all French Forms. Because of the rigidity of their structure they are often called *fixed* forms. They are characterized by a certain quaintness and charming repetitions. The general effect should be that of light verse, where the thoughts are daintily and harmoniously expressed. There should be present no jarring element. Rhymes and diction should be so finely wrought that each has the effect of inevitability. In view of the paucity of rhymes in the English language, the poet's ability is put to the utmost test.

In a given poem no word or syllable, once used as a rhyme, may be used again for that purpose. Even though the word is spelled differently and retains the same sound (like *hail* and *hale*, *tend* and *contend*, *claim* and *acclaim*), English poets seek to avert its use. The rhyming syllable must be a new one in sound and sense. This rule of course is applicable to English poetry in general. The refrain, an important part of the French Forms, must be more than a mere repetition of sounds. It must be used in such a manner as to further the thought and should be so coordinated with the poem as a whole as to make it an essential and delightful unit.

BALLADE

The ballade is the most important, as well as the oldest and most popular of the French Forms. Guy de la Tremouille (?-1398) and Eustache Deschamps (1340-1415) share the honor of being the first to devise the elaborate rules which characterize its structure. Deschamps was especially active in cultivating the form, having left no less than 1175 ballades. François Villon

(1431-after 1463) achieved the highest artistic results and is therefore commonly alluded to as the "prince of all ballade-makers." In France the ballade enjoyed its greatest popularity during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thereafter it was used only occasionally, until, through the efforts of Theodore de Bauville, interest again revived in the form.

In England the ballade appeared as early as the fourteenth century. Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower both experimented with the form, the latter presenting, on one occasion, fifty of them to the king. The ballade did not, however, come into favor until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Austin Dobson is credited with having published the first ballade (*The Prodigals*) in this recent period of renewed interest in French Forms. Edmund Gosse, Andrew Lang, William E. Henley, and Algernon C. Swinburne soon took up the form and contributed many excellent examples.

The standard form of the ballade calls for three stanzas of eight lines each, and a concluding stanza of four lines, called the *envoy*. The general rhyme scheme for the stanza is a-b-a-b-b-c-b-R; for the envoy b-c-b-R, (R representing the refrain line and rhyming with c). Andrew Lang's *Ballade of the Southern Cross* will serve as an illustration:

Fair islands of the silver fleece,	(a)
Hoards of unsunned, uncounted gold,	(b)
Whose havens are the haunts of Peace,	(a)
Whose boys are in our quarrel bold;	(b)
<i>Our</i> bolt is shot, our tale is told,	(b)
Our ship of state in storms may toss,	(c)
But ye are young if we are old,	(b)
Ye Islands of the Southern Cross!	(R)
Aye, <i>we</i> must dwindle and decrease,	(a)
Such fates the ruthless years unfold;	(b)
And yet we shall not wholly cease,	(a)
We shall not perish unconsolated;	(b)
Nay, still shall Freedom keep her hold	(b)
Within the sea's inviolate fosse,	(c)
And boast her sons of English mould,	(b)
Ye Islands of the Southern Cross!	(R)

All empires tumble—Rome and Greece— (a)
 Their swords are rust, their altars cold! (b)
 For us, the Children of the Seas, (a)
 Who ruled where'er the waves have rolled, (b)
 For us, in Fortune's books enscribed, (b)
 I read no runes of hopeless loss; (c)
 Nor—while *ye* last—our knell is tolled, (b)
 Ye Islands of the Southern Cross! (R)

 Britannia, when thy hearth's a-cold, (b)
 When o'er thy grave has grown the moss, (c)
 Still *Rule Australia* shall be trolled (b)
 In Islands of the Southern Cross! (R)

The refrain-line must close all stanzas and the envoy. This line is the outstanding feature of the ballade, and its thought should dominate the poem. Its use as the end line must come naturally, without any intimation of effort or force. A familiar device for the refrain is that of asking a question, like *Where are the Pipes of Pan? But where are the galleons of Spain?* and *Where are the cities of old time?* Each stanza in the ballade should represent an unbroken unit in thought, the sense being concluded or changed only at the end of the stanza.

The envoy is frequently begun with an invocation to some being of abstraction, as *Prince, Princess, Life, Friend, Love*, and *Britannia*. As a culmination to the poem, the envoy should rise to a higher pitch and to a more stately level than the preceding stanzas.

Certain writers deviate from the usual mechanical scheme. Swinburne employs stanzas of ten lines each and an envoy of five lines in *The Épitaph in Form of a Ballade*. The rhyme scheme becomes a-b-a-b-b-c-c-d-c-d for the stanzas and c-c-d-c-d for the envoy. Henley adopts a twelve-line arrangement for the stanzas in *Ballade of Truisms*.

The *Double Ballade* is merely a lengthened ballade, with six stanzas instead of the usual three. This type of ballade may also be written with ten-line and eleven-line stanzas. Henley's *Double Ballade of the Nothingness of Things* is an excellent example of the latter. The use of the envoy is optional. For the eight-line stanza the usual rhyme is a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c; and for the ten-line form, a-b-a-b-b-c-c-d-c-d.

Henley, among others, has made use of a double refrain in the *Ballade of Youth and Age*. Two refrain lines appear in each stanza, in the fourth and the eighth lines; and two also appear in the envoy, in the second and fourth lines. Two stanzas from the foregoing poem will make this clear:

Spring at her height on a morn at prime,
 Sails that laugh from a flying squall,
 Pomp of harmony, rapture of rhyme—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
 Winter sunsets and leaves that fall,
 An empty flagon, a folded page,
 A tumble-down wheel, a tattered ball—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Bells that clash in a gorgeous chime,
 Swords that clatter in onsets tall,
 The words that ring and the fames that climb—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
 Old hymnals prone in a dusty stall,
 A bald blind bird in a crazy cage,
 The scene of a faded festival—
These are a type of the world of Age.

CHANT ROYAL

The chant royal is one of the less popular of the French Forms. It derives its name from the fact either that it was a form chosen for recitation before the king, or that those poets who succeeded in writing it were deserving of kingly honors. The chant royal is merely a more elaborate and more dignified form of ballade. There are five stanzas of eleven lines and an envoy of five. The rhyme order is a-b-a-b-c-c-d-d-e-d-e for the stanzas and d-d-e-d-e for the envoy. Clinton Scollard's *King Boreas* will serve as a good illustration:

I sit enthroned 'mid icy wastes afar,	(a)
Beyond the level land of endless snow,	(b)
For months I see the brilliant polar star	(a)
Shine on a shore, the lonelier none may know.	(b)
Supreme I rule in monarchy of might,—	(c)

- My realms are boundless as the realms of Night. (c)
 Proud court I hold, and tremblingly obey (d)
 My many minions from the isles of Day; (d)
 And when my heralds sound aloud, behold (e)
 My slaves appear with suppliant heads alway. (d)
 I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold. (R)
- I am the god of all the winds that are!
 I blow where'er I list,—I come, I go.
 Athwart the sky upon my cloud-capped car
 I rein my steeds, swift-prancing to and fro.
 The dreary woodlands shudder in affright
 To hear thy clarion on the mountain height.
 The sobbing sea doth moan in pain, and pray,
 "Is there no refuge from the storm-king's sway?"
 I am as aged as the earth is old,
 Yet strong am I although my locks are grey;
 I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold. (R)
- I loose my chains, and then with awful jar
 And presage of disaster and dire woe,
 Out rush the storms and sound the clash of war
 'Gainst all the earth, and shrill their bugles blow.
 I bid them haste; they bound in eager flight
 Toward far fair lands, where'er the sun's warm light
 Makes mirth and joyance; there, in rude affray,
 They trample down, despoil, and crush and slay.
 They turn green meadows to a desert wold,
 And naught for rulers of the earth care they;—
 I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold. (R)
- When in the sky, a lambent scimitar,
 In early eve Endymion's bride doth glow,
 When night is perfect, and no cloud doth mar
 The peace of nature, when the rivers' flow
 Is soft and musical, and when the sprite
 Whispers to lovers on each breeze bedight
 With fragrance, then I steal forth, as I may,
 And seize upon whate'er I will for prey,
 I see the billows high as hilltops rolled,
 And clutch and flaunt aloft the snowy spray!
 I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold. (R)

I am in league with Death. When I unbar
 My triple-guarded doors, and there bestow
 Upon my frost-fiends freedom, bid them scar
 The brightest dales with summer blooms a-row,
 They breathe on every bower a deadly blight,
 And all is sere and withered in their sight.
 Unheeded now, Apollo's warming ray
 Wakes not the flower, for my chill breezes play
 Where once soft zephyrs swayed the marigold,
 And where his jargon piped the noisy jay,—
 I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold. (R)

Envoy

O Princess, hearken what my trumpets say!— (d)
 "Man's life is naught, no mortal lives for aye; (d)
 His might hath empire only of the mold," (e)
 Boast not yourselves, ye fragile forms of clay! (d)
 I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold. (R)

The poem is restricted to five rhymes, one of them repeated three times and the others twice in each stanza. For the entire poem this necessitates fifteen rhymes on one terminal sound and ten on each of the other four. The last line of the first stanza is used as the last of the others and of the envoy. This scheme so restricts the poet that comparatively few successful poems have been written in this class. In some instances poets have adapted a ten-line stanzaic model, with an envoy of six lines.

PANTOUM

The pantoum is not, strictly speaking, one of the French Forms; it is derived, rather, from Malayan sources. Since it was introduced into France by Ernest Fouinet and later popularized by Victor Hugo in the *Orientales*, it has come to be regarded at least as one of the strict forms, and is therefore usually admitted to classification under French Forms. The pantoum is composed of four-line stanzas, of which there may be any number, as Brander Matthews' *En Route* will show:

Here we are riding the rail, (a)
 Gliding from out of the station; (b)
 Man though I am, I am pale, (a)
 Certain of heat and vexation. (b)

Gliding from out of the station, (b)
 Out from the city we thrust; (c)
 Certain of heat and vexation, (b)
 Sure to be covered with dust. (c)

Out from the city we thrust: (c)
 Rattling we run o'er the bridges: (d)
 Sure to be covered with dust, (c)
 Stung by a thousand of midges. (d)

Rattling we dash o'er the bridges,
 Rushing we dash o'er the plain;
 Stung by a thousand of midges,
 Certain precursors of rain.

Rushing we dash o'er the plain,
 Watching the clouds darkly lowering,
 Certain precursors of rain:
 Fields about here need a showering.

Watching the clouds darkly lowering,—
 Track here is high on a bank—
 Fields about here need a showering,
 Boy with the books needs a spank.

Track here is high on a bank,
 Just by a wretched old hovel:
 Boy with the books needs a spank—
 "No! I don't want a new novel!"

Just by a wretched old hovel,
 Small speck of dust in my eye.
 "No! I don't want a new novel!"
 —Babies beginning to cry.—

Small speck of dust in my eye,
 "I will not buy papers or candy!"
 —Babies beginning to cry.—
 Oh, for a tomahawk handy!

"I will not buy papers or candy!"
 Train boys deserve to be slain;
 Oh, for a tomahawk handy!
 Oh, for the cool of the rain!

Train boys deserve to be slain,
 Heat and the dust—they are choking,
 Oh, for the cool of the rain!

—"Gent" just behind me is joking.

Heat and the dust—they are choking,

Clogging and filling my pores;

—"Gent" just behind me is joking,

"Gent" just in front of me snores.

Clogging and filling my pores,

Ears are on edge at the rattle;

"Gent" just in front of me snores,

Sounds like the noise of a battle.

Ears are on edge at the rattle,

Man though I am, I am pale,

Sounds like the noise of a battle,

Here we are riding the rail.

The rhyme order proceeds a-b-a-b; b-c-b-c; and so on until the last stanza, which might be represented as z-a-z-a. The second and fourth lines of each stanza, except the last, are used as the first and third of the succeeding stanza. The first and third lines of the first stanza frequently become the fourth and second lines respectively of the concluding stanza, making the first and last lines of the poem identical. Because of its repetitious nature, the pantoum is so likely to be monotonous. To offset this weakness, the writers usually select some experience in which the recurrence of certain sounds or acts justifies reassertion. It is well, also, to give the poem some semi-humorous turn, especially where the thought turns upon some annoying elements. In Brander Matthews' foregoing poem the irritating experiences of train-riding, to which one is frequently subjected, are suitably expressed.

RONDEAU

In France the rondeau came into special prominence during the reign of Louis XIV. Voiture was foremost among the poets who used the form. In his hands the rondeau attained a distinctive aristocratic grace and became an attractive vehicle for wit and compliment. While several of the English writers have succeeded admirably in recapturing the delicate precision of the

French writers, they have nevertheless been somewhat baffled by the subtle gaiety which the French pieces possess. In English the rondeau is used mainly for serious subjects.

This form employs fifteen iambic lines of eight and ten syllables. Two of these lines are devoted to the refrain, which consists of either the first word or the first half of the first line. The poem is divided into three stanzas, the first of five lines, the second of three lines and a refrain, and the third of five lines and the refrain. Austin Dobson's *In After Days* is a typical example:

In after days when grasses high	(a)
O'ertop the stone where I shall lie,	(a)
Though ill or well the world adjust	(b)
My slender claim to honour'd dust,	(b)
I shall not question nor reply.	(a)
I shall not see the morning sky;	(a)
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;	(a)
I shall be mute, as all men must	(b)
In after days!	(R)
But yet, now living, fain were I	(a)
That some one then should testify,	(a)
Saying— <i>He held his pen in trust</i>	(b)
<i>To art, not serving shame or lust.</i>	(b)
Will none? Then let my memory die	(a)
In after days!	(R)

It will be noticed that only two rhymes are permitted: a-a-b-b-a; a-a-b-R; a-a-b-b-a-R.

RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ

The rondeau redoublé contains five stanzas of four lines each and a concluding stanza of four lines and a refrain. The refrain is composed of the first half of line one in stanza one. Observe Cosmo Monkhouse's *Rondeau Redoublé*:

My soul is sick of nightingale and rose,	(1)	(a)
The perfume and the darkness of the grove;	(2)	(b)
I weary of the fevers and the throes,	(3)	(a)
And all the enervating dreams of love.	(4)	(b)

At morn I love to hear the lark, and rove (b)
 The meadows, where the simple daisy shows (a)
 Her guiltless bosom to the skies above— (b)
 My soul is sick of nightingale and rose. (1) (a)

The afternoon is sweet, and sweet repose,
 But let me lie where breeze-blown branches move.
 I hate the stillness where the sunbeams doze,
 The perfume and the darkness of the grove. (2)

I love to hear at eve the gentle dove
 Contented coo the day's delightful close.
 She sings of love and all the calm thereof,—
 I weary of the fevers and the throes. (3)

I love the night, who like a mother throws
 Her arms round hearts that throbbed and limbs that strove,
 As kind as Death, that puts an end to woes
 And all the enervating dreams of love. (4)

Because my soul is sick of fancies wove
 Of fervid ecstasies and crimson glows;
 Because the taste of cinnamon and clove
 Palls on my palate—let no man suppose
 My soul is sick.

The rhyme order for the first stanza is a-b-a-b; for the second b-a-b-a. These alternate until the end. Indicating the lines in stanza one by 1, 2, 3, and 4, line one becomes the terminal line for stanza two; line two, of stanza three; line three, of stanza four; and line four, of stanza five. In the first stanza the main thought of the poem is presented. The succeeding four stanzas develop this thought; and the last stanza gives the conclusion.

RONDEL

In French literature Charles d'Orleans (1391-1465) is regarded as the best writer of rondels. At first the rondel was a lyric of two stanzas, with a repetition of lines not unlike that of the triolet. In its mechanical features the rondel is a cross between the rondeau and the triolet. The regular English rondel calls for fourteen lines and two rhyming sounds: a-b-b-a; a-b-a-b;

a-b-b-a-a-b. This arrangement is made clear by examining Clinton Scollard's *Rondel*:

Upon the stair I see my lady stand,	(a)
Her hair is like the gleaming gold of dawn,	(b)
And, like the laughing sunbeam on the lawn,	(b)
The radiant smile by which her lips are spanned.	(a)
A chiselled marvel seems her slender hand	(a)
What time she waves it ere my steps are gone;	(b)
Upon the stair I see my lady stand,	(a)
Her hair is like the gleaming gold of dawn.	(b)
Through the green covert that the breeze has fanned	(a)
She fleets as graceful as the flexile fawn;	(b)
She is the star to which my soul is drawn	(b)
When shadows drive the daylight from the land.	(a)
Upon the stair I see my lady stand,	(a)
Her hair is like the gleaming gold of dawn.	(b)

The first and second lines are used as a kind of refrain, repeated in the seventh and eighth lines and sometimes in the thirteenth and fourteenth. Since three pairs of lines are often the same, the task of weaving them into the poem without breaking the continuity of the thought becomes a delicate one. Rondels are also written with only thirteen lines, as in Samuel M. Peck's *Before the Dawn*:

Before the dawn begins to glow,
 A ghostly company I keep;
 Across the silent room they creep,
 The buried forms of friend and foe.
 Amid the throng that come and go,
 There are two eyes that make me weep;
 Before the dawn begins to glow,
 A ghostly company I keep.
 Two dear dead eyes. I love them so!
 They shine like starlight on the deep;
 And often when I am asleep
 They stoop and kiss me, bending low,
 Before the dawn begins to glow.

Only the first line is repeated at the close in this variant.

RONDELET

The rondelet consists of seven lines with the rhyme scheme a-b-a-a-b-b-a. The first line is the refrain and appears as the third and seventh lines. May Probyn's *Which way he went?* illustrates the form:

"Which way he went?"	(a)
I know not—how should I go spy	(b)
Which way he went?	(a)
I only know him gone. "Relent?"	(a)
He never will—unless I die!	(b)
And then, what will it signify	(b)
Which way he went?	(a)

ROUNDELS

The roundel is chiefly associated with Algernon C. Swinburne, who wrote one hundred of them in *A Century of Roundels*. In this form there are eleven lines, two of them being refrain lines consisting of a word, or the half, of line one. The rhyme arrangement is a-b-a-b; b-a-b; a-b-a-b. Among the many roundels that Swinburne has written, the first part of *Étude Réaliste* has won many admirers:

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,	(a)
Might tempt, should heaven see meet,	(b)
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,	(a)
A baby's feet.	(b)
Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat	(b)
They stretch and spread and wink	(a)
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.	(b)
No flower-bells that expand and shrink	(a)
Gleam half so heavenly sweet	(b)
As shine on life's untrodden brink	(a)
A baby's feet.	(b)

SESTINA

The sestina is the most difficult of the surviving Provençal forms. It was invented by Arnaut Daniel in the thirteenth cen-

ture. Undue importance is attached to the form for the reason that Dante and Petrarch used it. In both France and England the *sestina* was not cultivated until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Some look upon the type as the highest expression of poetic art among the fixed forms; others regard it as a mere metrical exercise and monstrosity.

The *sestina* has six stanzas of six lines each and a concluding three-line stanza, often called the *tornado*. The lines of the six stanzas are of the same length; and the same six rhyming words are used throughout. The earliest as well as the strictest rules did not allow rhymes; but the more recent writers use two and sometimes three rhyme sounds. Thus Florence M. Byrne uses six different non-rhyming sounds in *Sestina*, namely *paradise*, *heart*, *tears*, *fair*, *rose*, and *fate*. Charles W. Coleman uses three rhyme sounds in *Love's Going*; and Swinburne employs two in *Sestina*:

I saw my soul at rest upon a <i>day</i>	(a)	(1)
As the bird sleeping in the nest at <i>night</i> ,	(b)	(2)
Among soft leaves that give the starlight <i>way</i>	(a)	(3)
To touch its wings but not its eyes with <i>light</i> ;	(b)	(4)
So that it knew as one in visions <i>may</i> ,	(a)	(5)
And knew not as men waking, of <i>delight</i> .	(b)	(6)

This was the measure of my soul's <i>delight</i> ;	(b)
It had no power of joy to fly by <i>day</i> ,	(a)
Nor part in the large lordship of the <i>light</i> ;	(b)
But in a secret moon-beholden <i>way</i>	(a)
Had all its will of dreams and pleasant <i>night</i> ,	(b)
And all the love and life that sleepers <i>may</i> .	(a)

But such life's triumph as men waking *may*
 It might not have to feed its faint *delight*
 Between the stars by night and sun by *day*
 Shut up with green leaves and a little *light*;
 Because its way was as a lost star's *way*.
 A world's not wholly known of day or *night*.

All loves and dreams and sounds and gleams of *night*
 Made it all music that such minstrels *may*,
 And all they had they gave it of *delight*;
 But in the full face of the fire of *day*

What place shall be for any starry *light*,
 What part of heaven in all the wide sun's *way*?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the *way*,
 Watched as a nursling of the large-eyed *night*,
 And sought no strength nor knowledge of the *day*,
 Nor closer touch conclusive of *delight*,
 Nor mightier joy nor truer than dreamers *may*,
 Nor more of song than they, nor more of *light*.

For who sleeps once and sees the secret *light*
 Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer *way*
 Between the rise and rest of day and *night*,
 Shall care no more to fare as all men *may*,
 But be his place of pain or of *delight*,
 There shall he dwell, beholding night as *day*.

Song, have thy *day* and take thy fill of *light*
 Before the night be fallen across thy *way*;
 Sing while he may, man hath no long *delight*.

For the odd-numbered stanzas the rhyme scheme is a-b-a-b-a-b; for the even-numbered, b-a-b-a-b-a. The end words are shifted about in such a manner that the final word of each stanza appears as the final word of the first line in the next stanza. The final word of the first line in a stanza is repeated as the final word of the second line in the succeeding stanza. The closing stanza must use all six end words, three in the middle of the lines, and three as the terminals. The arrangement of these words in the quoted poem will be made clear by giving each end word a number, one to six. The first stanza would then naturally be represented by 1-2-3-4-5-6; the order of the second stanza would be 6-1-4-3-2-5, of the third stanza 5-6-1-4-3-2; of the fourth 2-5-6-1-4-3, of the fifth 3-2-1-6-5-4, and of the sixth 4-3-2-5-6-1. It will be seen that no end word occurs in the same position more than twice.

TRIOLET

The triolet is one of the most attractive of the French Forms. It carries with it a vivacious and artless atmosphere. We cannot hope to find a neater, more graceful poetic package. While not

adapted for the conveying of a profound emotion, it pleases with its skillful turn and the merriment of its rhythm. The first triolets of which we have any record are in the Clemonades of Adenezle-Roi of the thirteenth century. At first the triolet was more serious than it is now. Instead of the earlier eleven-syllable lines, we now write triolets in lines of eight syllables and sometimes of six syllables. Robert Bridges was the first to print a triolet in modern English.

The regular form of the triolet calls for eight lines, with the following rhyme: a-b-a-a-a-b-a-b. The first line appears again as the fourth; and the first two lines are used as the seventh and eighth. There are then only five different lines in the entire poem.

Some triolets convey a somewhat serious thought:

<i>Oh, Love's but a dance,</i>	(a)
<i>Where Time plays the fiddle!</i>	(b)
See the couples advance—	(a)
<i>Oh! Love's but a dance!</i>	(a)
A whisper, a glance,—	(a)
'Shall we twirl down the middle?'	(b)
<i>Oh, Love's but a dance,</i>	(a)
<i>Where Time plays the fiddle!</i>	(b)
—Austin Dobson	

Dobson's "*Urceus Exit*" is lighter:

I intended an Ode,
 And it turned to a Sonnet.
 It began *à la mode*,
 I intended an Ode;
 But Rose crossed the road
 In her latest new bonnet;
 I intended an Ode;
 And it turned to a Sonnet.

Still more informal is *The Vanishing Point* by Corinne Rockwell Swain:

What became of the fly
When I reached for the swatter?
 It circled the pie;

What became of the fly
 I know it lurks nigh,
 And my vengeance grows hotter.
What became of the fly
 When I reached for the swatter?

VILLANELLE

In its earliest form the villanelle was a kind of idyllic song, largely devoted to pastoral themes. Later on it became a vehicle for the conveying of both serious and light moods, the latter predominating. Henley has written a poem on the villanelle (*Villanelle*) in which he employs a number of suggestive terms by way of describing it. According to Henley, the villanelle is a "dainty thing," "sly" and "musical," a "jewel in rhyme," "double-clappered silver bell," and

... filled with sweetness, as a shell
 Is filled with sound, and launched in time.

The villanelle is marked by refrains and repetition. According to the prevailing model, there are five three-line stanzas and a concluding one of four lines. The first line of the first stanza reappears as the last of stanzas two and four; and the last line of the first stanza is repeated as the last line of the third, fifth, and last stanza. Eight of the nineteen lines are therefore devoted to a so-called refrain. Only two rhyme sounds are permitted, the stanzas following the order of a-b-a.

Austin Dobson's *When I Saw You Last, Rose* has in it a delightful mixture of light-heartedness and sadness:

When I saw you last, Rose, (a)
 You were only so high;— (b)
 How fast the time goes! (a)

Like a bud ere it blows,
 You just peeped at the sky,
 When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,
 Now your May-time is nigh;—
 How fast the time goes!

And a life,—how it grows!
 You were scarcely so shy,
 When I saw you last, Rose!
 In your bosom it shows
 There's a guest on the sly;
 How fast the time goes!
 Is it Cupid? Who knows!
 Yet you used not to sigh,
 When I saw you last, Rose;—
 How fast the time goes!

QUESTIONS

(Helen Louise Cohen's *Lyric Forms from France* (Harcourt, Brace and Company) contains the French Forms listed in the following exercises.)

1. Look over the back numbers of humorous magazines and bring to class an example for each of as many French Forms as you can find.
2. Test the accuracy of Richard Untermyer's line:
 "Ballades are built on their refrain."
3. Suggest ten lines that would be suitable for refrain lines in the ballade.
4. Why is the chant royal a less desirable and less popular form than the ballade?
5. The pantoum requires a certain type of subject. Present five possible situations which might serve admirably as themes for this type. In this connection read Austin Dobson's *In Town*.
6. Account for the great popularity of the rondeau.
7. After reading Eliot Napier's *All Men Are Free*, Austin Dobson's *A Rondeau to Ethel* and *The Hurry of This Time*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *A Man Must Live*, Henley's *When Men Are Old*, Edmund Gosse's *Expectation*, and Brander Matthew's *Sub Rosa*, what can you say about the variety of themes in the *rondeau*?
8. Make a study of Henley's sequence of rondels in *Variations*. What are its possibilities when considered beside sonnet sequences?

9. Contrast the *sonnet* and the *rondel* with respect to their versatility as poetic forms.
10. Examine Swinburne's *Complaint of Liza* as an example of the *double sestina*. Wherein does it differ from the regular form?
11. Consider Kipping's *Sestina of the Tramp Royal* and Scollard's *Cupid and the Shepherd* as examples of successful literary art.
12. Write a triolet on any one of the following refrains:
 - (a) I looked for my love,
But found she was gone.
 - (b) Oh, rivers are merry
And flowers are gay.
 - (c) Time is a loom,
And we are the weavers.
 - (d) Your friend will I be
If you promise devotion.
 - (e) Why should we depart
When the moon is but young?
 - (f) I gave all my life
To the one who forsook me.
13. What characteristics of the villanelle does Henley suggest in his *The Villanelle*?
14. Which of the French Forms, do you think, are best adapted for light, gay sentiment? Which, for a thoughtful, serious mood?
15. Contrast Arlo Bates' *Might Love Be Bought* (rondeau), Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* (society verse), and Richard Lovelace's *To Lucasta, Going to the Wars* (love lyric) as love poems.

EXAMPLES

(A large number of the examples herein listed appear in *Lyric Forms from France* by Helen Louise Cohen.)

BALLADE

English:

Geoffrey Chaucer: The Truth Shall Make you Free
The Complaint of Chaucer to his Empty Purse

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Ballade of Dead Ladies (translation of Villon's *Ballade des Dames du Temp Jadis*)

Justin McCarthy: I Wonder in What Isle of Bliss

Algernon Charles Swinburne: The Epitaph in Form of a Ballad
(Villon)

Double Ballade of August

Ballad Written for a Bridegroom (Villon)

Austin Dobson: A Ballad of Heroes

The Prodigals

A Ballad to Queen Elizabeth

The Ballad of Imitation

John Payne: Double Ballade of the Singers of the Time

Andrew Lang: Ballade of the Southern Cross

Ballade to Theocritus, in Winter

On His Choice of a Sepulcher

Ballade of Primitive Man

Ballade of Middle Age

Edmund William Gosse: The Ballad of Dead Cities

William Ernest Henley: Ballade of Dead Actors

Ballade of Truisms

Double Ballade of Life and Fate

Ballade of Spring

Ballade of Midsummer Days and Nights

Ballade of Youth and Age

Graham R. Tomson (Mrs. Rosamund Watson): Asphodel

Richard Le Gallienne: A Ballade Catalogue of Lovely Things

Ballade of the Oldest Duel in the World

American:

Louise Chandler Moulton: In Winter

Brander Matthews: An American Girl

A Ballade of Midsummer

Clinton Scollard: Ballade of Dead Poets

For Me the Blithe Ballade

Where are the Ships of Tyre?

Gelett Burgess: Ballade of Fog in the Cañon

Edwin Arlington Robinson: Ballade of Broken Flutes

Ballade by the Fire

Arthur Guiterman: Ballade of Caution

Burges Johnson: Ballade of the Little Things That Count

Witter Bynner: "The Loves of Every Day"
 Joyce Kilmer: Princess Ballade
 Carolyn Wells: A Ballade of Indignation

CHANT ROYAL

English:

Austin Dobson: The Dance of Death
 Samuel Waddington: The New Epiphany
 Edmund William Gosse: The Praise of Dionysus

American:

John Payne: The God of Love
 Henry Cuyler Bunner: Behold the Deeds!
 Clinton Scollard: King Boreas
 Gelett Burgess: Chant-Royal of the True Romance
 Chant-Royal of California
 Don Marquis: Chant of the Changing Hours

PANTOUM

English:

Austin Dobson: In Town

American:

Brander Matthews: En Route
 Clinton Scollard: In the Sultan's Garden
 Michael Lewis: First Performance (Metropolitan Opera House)

RONDEAU

English:

Leigh Hunt: Rondeau
 Austin Dobson: "On London Stones"
 A Rondeau to Ethel
 "With Pipe and Flute"
 You Bid Me Try
 In After Days
 The Hurry of This Time
 "Farewell, Renown!"
 Robert Bridges: His Poisoned Shafts
 William Ernest Henley: What Is to Come?
 My Love to Me

When You Are Old

Edmund Gosse: Expectation

Love's Quarrel

Richard La Gallienne: The Wonder-Child

John McCrae: In Flanders Fields

Elliott Napier: All Men Are Free

American:

John Payne: Life Lapses By

Arlo Bates: Might Love Be Bought

Brander Matthews: Sub Rosa

Samuel Minturn Peck: Beyond the Night

Among My Books

Henry Cuyler Bunner: September

That New Year's Call

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Man Must Live

Frank Dempster Sherman: Come, Pan, and Pipe

Thomas Augustine Daly: A Song to One

Louis Untermeyer: A Father Speaks

Christopher Morley: When Shakespeare Laughed

RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ

English:

Graham R. Tomson (Mrs. Rosamund Watson): Rondeau
Redoublé

American:

John Payne: Rondeau Redoublé

Clinton Scollard: The Prayer of Dryope

Gelett Burgess: A Daughter of the North

Louis Untermeyer: A Complacent Rondeau Redoublé

RONDEL

English:

Austin Dobson: The Wanderer

"Vitas Hinnuleo"

Too Hard It Is to Sing

Edmund Gosse: Rondel (After Antyde of Tegea)

William Ernest Henley: Variations (Series of four)

Rondel

Robert Louis Stevenson: We'll Walk the Woods No More
 John Drinkwater: Earth Love

American:

Samuel Minturn Peck: Before the Dawn
 Henry Cuyler Bunner: Ready for the Ride—1795
 Frank Dempster Sherman: "Awake, Awake"
 Clinton Scollard: Upon the Stair I See My Lady Stand
 I Heard a Maid With Her Guitar
 Gelett Burgess: Rondel of Perfect Friendship
 Christopher Morley: Twilight

ROUNDEL

English:

Algernon Charles Swinburne: Babyhood (series of four)
 The Roundel
 Étude Réaliste (series of three)
 Samuel Waddington: Mors et Vita
 Arthur Symons: A Roundel of Rest

SESTINA

English:

Algernon Charles Swinburne: Sestina
 The Complaint of Liza (double sestina)
 Edmund Gosse: Sestina (To F. H.)
 A. Mary F. Robinson: Pulvis et Umbra
 Rudyard Kipling: Sestina of the Tramp-Royal

American:

Charlotte Perkins Stetson: "Homes"
 Clinton Scollard: Cupid and the Shepherd
 Gelett Burgess: Sestina of Youth and Age
 Ezra Pound: Sestina: Altaforte

TRIOLET

English:

George Macdonald: Serenade Triolet
 Austin Dobson: A Kiss
 "Urceus Exit"
 Notes of a Honeymoon (series of three)
 Circe

A Greek Gift

Oh, Love's But a Dance

Robert Bridges: When First We Met

Triolet (All women born are so perverse)

William Ernest Henley: Triolet (Easy is the Triolet)

Edmund Gosse: Triolet, After Catullus

A. Mary F. Robinson: What can heal a broken heart?

Graham R. Tomson (Mrs. Rosamund Watson): Triolet

Arthur Symons: Vestigia

American:

Henry Cuyler Bunner: A Pitcher of Mignonette

Walter Learned: In Explanation

Arlo Bates: A Rose

Brander Matthews: August: Hottest Day of the Year

Clinton Scollard: A Snowflake in May

Arthur Guiterman: Parable

Don Marquis: The Triolet

VILLANELLE

English:

Austin Dobson: "When I Saw You Last, Rose"

Tu Ne Quaesieris

On a Nankin Plate

Andrew Lang: Villanelle (To Lucia)

William Ernest Henley: The Villanelle

Where's the use of sighing?

Edmund Gosse: Villanelle (Would'st thou not be content to die?)

Villanelle (Little mistress mine, good-bye!)

Samuel M. Peck: Bonnie Belle

Oscar Wilde: Theocritus

Ernest Dowson: Villanelle of Acheron

Villanelle of Sunset

American:

Edith M. Thomas: Where Are the Springs of Long Ago?

Clinton Scollard: Love, Why So Long Away

Edwin Arlington Robinson: The House on the Hill

Franklin Pierce Adams: Villanelle, with Stevenson's Assistance

Louis Untermeyer: Lugubrious Villanelle of Platitudes

GENERAL LYRIC

THE lyric forms which we have already considered do not include all lyrics. The poems which still remain untouched are grouped for convenience under one heading—*General Lyric*. Taken as a class, it contains more individual poems than does any other in the whole field of English literature. Every mood and emotion of the human heart is touched by the General Lyric; and the examples that are found within its domain are taken from every period of English and American writings.

The General Lyric is here divided into eight groups. In each instance the subject of the lyric determines its classification. We have, therefore, lyrics on *love, nature, persons, childhood*, as well as those of a *reflective, patriotic, satiric, and religious* nature.

LYRICS ON LOVE

No subject in literature is more universally popular than that of love. Lyrics on love are distributed over every period in the literatures of the various civilized countries. We are always safe in saying that nothing is more eternally persistent than the love of one individual for another.

Society verse, as we have seen, also deals with the theme of love; but the love lyrics which we are considering in this present chapter are distinguished from the former by their unmistakable sincerity, seriousness, and true passion. This is made clear by examining a stanza from each of two poems. A typical society verse mood is expressed in the following second stanza taken from Oliver Wendell Holmes' *To an Insect*:

Thou art a female, Katydid?
I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
So petulant and shrill,

I think there is a knot of you
Beneath the hollow tree,—
A knot of spinster Katydids,—
Do Katydids drink tea?

In sharp contrast to the foregoing, note the following passionate lines from Burns' *Of A' the Airts*:

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between,
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

In this latter stanza the heart is warmer and the pulse beats faster. The difference in every case is not so marked as in these two examples; but the essential contrast in mood is nevertheless true in type, if not in degree.

There are various kinds of lyrics on love. First of all, certain poems deal with *love in general*. Of such a nature are Emerson's *Give All to Love*, Swinburne's *We Have Seen Thee, O Love*, Bridges' *Awake, My Heart, To Be Loved*, and Blake's *Love's Secret*. In the next place, Scott's *A Serenade* and Rossetti's *Love's Nocturne* each partake of the nature of a serenade—a melodious, dreamy piece in praise of love, soliciting its favor, and not unlike the lyric which might be sung by a lover under the window of his beloved. Then, too, a number of love poems are concerned with *courtship*. The best known of these is Wyatt's *An Earnest Suit*. We should naturally expect to find, also, countless love lyrics which pay a *tribute to the beloved*. Wordsworth's *She Was a Phantom of Delight* and Byron's *She Walks in Beauty* are memorable for the lofty sentiments which the poets have eternized. Ofttimes, also, the poet expresses a *criticism of his beloved*, as does Patmore in *Departure* and Thomas Carew in *Ingrateful Beauty Threatened*. Those love lyrics that present the idea of *parting and separation* are naturally among the most stirring of love lyrics. We have two passionate instances in Burns'

Æ Fond Kiss and Byron's *When We Two Parted*. The latter of these is exquisite:

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on thy brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well:—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears.

It is not unusual to meet lyrics devoted to the *love between married people*. Such is the nature of Patmore's *The Married Lover*; Burns' incomparable *John Anderson, My Jo*; and Brown-

ing's *A Woman's Last Word*. Finally, love has often been expressed in lyrics for *those beloved who are dead*. Longfellow's *The Cross of Snow* and Poe's mystical *The Raven* are a few of the many that reflect this kind of passion.

LYRICS ON NATURE

We need not search very diligently for the origin of nature lyrics. The love of nature springs naturally from the heart of every human being. The atmosphere of field and mountain, stream and ocean is innately a part of man's thought and speech. It seems, therefore, inevitable that reactions to the song of the bird and the sight of towering trees should spring spontaneously from the poet who is himself one of the most receptive and sensitive children of Nature.

Like the theme of love, so the subject of nature has been from the first a common ground for poetic discourse. Hebrew literature is filled with reference to nature, which element constitutes one of its many charms. In English literature we hear notes of nature very early in such narratives as *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. It is not until the thirteenth century, however, that we have our first so-called lyrical outburst on nature, namely in the *Cuckoo Song*. The few lyrics on nature that these early centuries, down to the seventeenth, have left us are chiefly concerned with the joy and freshness of the returning spring. John Lyly's *Trico's Song* ends with the line:

Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring!

In Thomas Nash's *Spring, the Sweet Spring*, the poet sees the flowers bloom, the maids dance, the birds sing, and the lambs frisk and play. Much the same delight in spring is presented in Henry Howard's *Description of Spring* and Sir Philip Sidney's *Song: The Nightingale*.

In the seventeenth century the writers had a rather indifferent feeling toward nature. The facts of nature were still little known; and the reference to her were, in the main, very indirect and formal. This will be found true of such outstanding nature lyrics of the period as Herrick's *Corinna's Going a-Maying*, *To Blossoms*, Marvell's *The Garden*, and Sir John Denham's *Cooper's Hill*. An instance of even mild repugnance to nature is

found in Cowley's *The Swallow*. The first twelve lines will suggest the poet's attitude:

Foolish Prater, what dost thou
 So early at my window do
 With thy tuneless serenade?
 Well't had been had Tereus made
 Thee as dumb as Philomel:
 There his knife had done but well.
 In thy undiscovered nest
 Thou dost all the winter rest,
 And dreamest o'er thy summer joys,
 Free from the stormy season's noise:
 Free from th' ill thou'st done to me;
 Who disturbs, or seeks out thee?

The eighteenth century poets loved the formal gardens as they loved formal verse. They had a friendly feeling toward the gentle, pleasant, and utilitarian forms of nature, such as were to be found in the well laid out plots of rural England. To us today the facts of nature which the writers of this age incorporated in their poetry are rather obvious. Their observations of nature are often narrow, unreliable, and uninteresting. Descriptions of nature were frequently vague and highly generalized, as in Collins' *Ode to Evening*:

...bright-haired sun
 Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
 With brede ethereal wove,
 O'erhang his wavy bed:

In his *Ode on the Spring* Thomas Gray sees

Cool Zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
 Their gather'd fragrance fling.

The underlying conception of nature was that of something quite removed from the affairs of man. The eighteenth century writers were fond of wide panoramic views. The clear blue sky and the stretch of open fields touched their senses very favorably; but the mountain, ocean, winter (except in James Thomson's *Winter*) and storm, in a general way, failed to attract them

seriously. Nor did they delight in the remote or the mysterious phases of nature.

As the century moved on, however, there was a gradual turning from the general to the particular, and from long-distant views to first-hand observation. A tolerance of nature was replaced by an enthusiasm for her. Burns speaks of the mountain daisy as almost of a human being:

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour.

The nature lyrics which Blake, Burns, and especially Wordsworth introduced were richer and more colorful. Sound and motion began to play a part. The wilder forms of nature's life became suitable material for the literary artist. Not only this, but in nature certain poets saw something of divinity itself. They became aware of the inter-relationship between nature and the life of man. No poet before Wordsworth would have written:

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

(From Wordsworth's *The Tables Turned*)

and

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

(From Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*)

To Wordsworth the earth was

An unsubstantial, faery place.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Nature took on such intimacy and reality that she could bring joy, peace, wisdom, inspiration, and teach holy precepts to her communing children. With certain modifications here and there, the poets of the nineteenth century continued to avail themselves of the new and larger aspects of nature which the writers of the latter eighteenth century had introduced.

As we glance over the English poets who wrote on nature, we find that nature necessarily meant something different to every poet. To some, nature brought joy; to others, despondency. In the minds of some it inspired devotion; in others, doubt and perplexity. One poet felt an impelling force in natural objects; another entered, as it were, the very spirit of the object itself and interpreted his reactions. At times we find a poet describing nature for its own sake, as did Shelley in *The Cloud*; and again by another we are made aware of a certain analogy that exists between external nature and human life, as in Robert Burns' *To a Mountain Daisy*. Again, the poet may report the typical impression that nature made upon his mind; or he may use the facts of nature as an allegory of human experience.

By the time that the twentieth century arrived there was scarcely any natural object that had not been made at one time or another the theme of some poem. Birds have always attracted the poet. The nightingale has been celebrated by Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Lady Winchilsea, Arnold, and Bridges. Among those who sing of the cuckoo are Wordsworth and Locker-Lampson. The lark has had its admirers in Wordsworth, Shelley, and Meredith. The American mocking bird is extolled by such American poets as Whitman, Lanier, and Albert Pike. The four most famous birds in English literature are the nightingale, skylark, blackbird, and cuckoo. Flowers have come in for their share of attention. Herrick's *To Daffodils*, Waller's *Go, Lovely Rose*, Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely*, Freneau's *The Wild Honeysuckle*, Bryant's *To the Fringed Gentian*, and Dobson's *To Daffodils* are among those that especially arrest our attention. Night has incited many poets to composition. Among the better known in this class are Blake's *Night*, Shelley's *To Night*, and Longfellow's *Hymn to the Night*. Nor did poets decline to stoop to the lowly in nature. On the insignifi-

cant grasshopper, Cowley, Lovelace, Keats, and Hunt all tried their skill.

LYRICS ON PERSONS

Lyrics on persons are not necessarily so popular as other kinds of lyrics; but in so far as they give us a new point of view on important personages whom we should all desire to know, they comprise an important group. Elegies also are concerned with individuals; but in these poems grief over the departed or reflections upon death in general are the pervading mood. In the lyrics on persons, adoration outweighs lament. Description and characterization are uppermost. Choice spirits of the world are here appraised and their deeds evaluated. In this class, therefore, we are mingling with a goodly company. Some of these lyrics are critical; others make no attempt to analyze either the character or work of the person. Most of the poems in this class are emulative and eulogistic in tone.

The greater number of lyrics in this group are written on poets. This is but natural. The poet writes about the type of personality he best understands. None but the poet so well comprehends the deep-seated springs of the artistic consciousness, the manifold and peculiar problems of writing, and the aspirations and dreams of a poet. It is well for us that poets have thus written about their fellow artists; for we have profited greatly by this insight into the poetic temperament and its estimates of true greatness and enduring fame. One of the best as well as the most famous of these lyrics on persons is that written by one of our three greatest English poets on one of the other members of this trio, namely Milton's *On Shakespeare*.

What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones
The labor of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endavoring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart

Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving,
And so sepulchered in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

Other notable instances of one poet writing on another are to be found in Tennyson's *Milton* and Landor's *To Robert Browning*.

Among the other lyrics on persons some striking variations are noticeable. Tennyson wrote a poem *To the Queen*. Dryden's *Heroic Stanzas* are in memory of the dictator, Cromwell. Lord Byron remembers the great general, Napoleon, in a portion of *Childe Harold*. Browning's *One Word More* was written on his wife, while Burns' *Address to the Deil* is directed to his Satanic majesty. Two of the best lyrics on persons to be written in our own century are Robinson's characterizations of the convivial Miniver Cheevy and of the curious Flammonde. In the first three stanzas of *Flammonde*, the poet represents his human subject as pretty much of a puzzle to his neighbors:

The man Flammonde, from God knows where,
With firm address and foreign air,
With news of nations in his talk
And something royal in his walk,
With glint of iron in his eyes,
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head
As one by kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose
About him, and about his clothes.
He pictured all tradition hears
Of what we owe to fifty years.
His cleansing heritage of taste
Paraded neither want nor waste;
And what he needed for his fee
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,

Had banished him from better days
 To play the Prince of Castaways.
 Meanwhile he played surpassing well
 A part, for most, unplayable;
 In fine, one pauses, half afraid
 To say for certain that he played.

Somehow this man played in his own way the game of life so well with his fellowmen as to call from them words of surprise and commendation:

What was he, when he came to sift
 His meaning, and to note the drift
 Of incommunicable ways
 That make us ponder while we praise?
 Why was it that his charm revealed
 Somehow the surface of a shield?
 What was it that we never caught?
 What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met
 We cannot ever know; nor yet
 Shall all he gave us quite atone
 For what was his, and his alone;
 Nor need we now, since he knew best,
 Nourish an ethical unrest:
 Rarely at once will nature give
 The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn
 From those who never will return,
 Until a flash of unforeseen
 Remembrance falls on what has been.
 We've each a darkening hill to climb;
 And this is why, from time to time
 In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
 Horizons for the man Flammonde.

LYRICS ON CHILDHOOD

The poet of mature years usually finds it difficult to write poems on childhood. To do so successfully he must project him-

self into the very mood and atmosphere of the juvenile days. This is not an easy task for those who have acquired that breadth of view and acuteness of intellect that years of experience inevitably bring. It is perhaps for this reason that English literature has so few good lyrics on childhood.

The requisites for childhood verse are no less exacting than for the more sober forms of lyrics. The innocent and uninvolved atmosphere that naturally surrounds the child calls for a correspondingly simple and unadorned verse form, as straightforward and unsophisticated as the thought and acts of the child itself. Here, as elsewhere, to arrive at that form of art which is simple but yet exalted is an undertaking worthy of the master poet. Simple words and a smooth and perfect rhythm are essential. The lyric of childhood should be brief, not the least fatiguing. While its theme is supposedly not profound, it must nevertheless reflect not a meaningless but a worth-while sentiment. The mood of the childhood lyric approaches that of dreamland, with its haze of wonder, joyfulness, and abandonment. With overseriousness it has nothing to do. Gravity is as foreign to its temperament as biting satire. The highest form of childhood lyrics can be enjoyed by young and old alike.

In the lyrics of this class we may expect to find represented the various interests that surround the child in a home. Often a poet, like Matthew Prior, will take a playful attitude toward youth, as reflected in his *To a Child of Quality*. Thinking about the difference in their respective ages, his and the child's, he is led to conclude:

For, as our different ages move,
"T is so ordained, (would Fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love,
When she begins to comprehend it.

Certain other poets approach the theme of childhood with a mild philosophic attitude. In *The Retreat* Vaughan thinks of the glory that surrounds the child. Somewhat the same point of view is presented in Graves' *Babylon*:

The child alone a poet is:
Spring and Fairyland are his.

Very enjoyable, in this same connection, is Robinson's *For Arvia* (On Her Fifth Birthday):

You Eyes, you large and all-inquiring Eyes,
That look so dubiously into me,
And are not satisfied with what you see,
Tell me the worst and let us have no lies;
Tell me the secret of your scrutinies,
And of myself. Am I a Mystery?
Am I a Boojum—or just Company?
What do you say? What do you think, You Eyes?
You say not; but you think, beyond a doubt;
And you have the whole world to think about,
With very little time for little things.
So let it be; and let it all be fair—
For you, and for the rest who cannot share
Your gold of unrevealed awakenings.

The idea that the child is a gift from the Almighty is a persistent one in this type of lyric. Speaking about two stars which she saw an angel drop from Heaven, Sara Teasdale, in *To Dick, on His Sixth Birthday*, continues:

Six years ago this very night
I saw them fall and wondered why
The angel dropped them from the sky—
But when I saw your eyes I knew
The angel sent the stars to you.

Certain other aspects of children's life have been treated by other writers. Swinburne, among others, was interested in the appearance of the child and has created for us that famous poem, *A Baby's Feet*. In *The Chimney Sweeper*, by Blake, we are conscious of a certain underlying irony, directed against those who permit the premature death of these grimy slaves of the chimney. Bunner's *One, Two, Three*, though partly narrative, borders upon pathos as the playful instincts of a crippled child are portrayed in a game with an old blind lady. The parental love for children is displayed with a great deal of sentiment in Longfellow's *The Children's Hour*; while in Francis Thompson's *A Child's Prayer* the innate religious feeling of the child is reflected.

A common possession among children is that of a lively romantic nature. Nathalia Crane has understandingly given us this idea in *The Janitor's Boy*, from which we quote three stanzas:

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
And the janitor's boy loves me;
He's going to hunt for a desert isle
In our geography.

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
He's as busy as he can be;
And down in the cellar he's making a raft
Out of an old settee.

The day that we sail, I shall leave this brief note,
For my parents I hate to annoy:
"I have flown away to an isle in the bay
With the janitor's red-haired boy."

LYRICS OF REFLECTION

The poems here considered as *Lyrics of Reflection* are primarily concerned with meditations upon the meaning of life. In this group are to be found the most candid statements concerning the interpretation of life of any class that we shall consider. We are impressed, also, with the directness with which these poems emanate from the deep-seated convictions of the poet. With the greatest economy of figure and symbol, the author tells us what he thinks.

Here and there are lines of daring. In *Invictus* we can imagine Henley defiantly shouting the lines:

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.

The same fearlessness characterizes Browning in *Prospice*:

I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last!
 I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
 And bade me creep past,
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
 Of pain, darkness, and cold.

Life may be a very prosaic affair; or it may sparkle with romance and heroism. In *Rabbi Ben Ezra* Browning faces the vicissitudes of life without a waver:

Then, welcome each rebuff
 That turns earth's smoothness rough,
 Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
 Be our joys three-parts pain!
 Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
 Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

- ✓ For many poets, man's days on the earth are a mystery. This is the spirit that surrounds Sara Teasdale's cosmic lyric, *The Voice*. To Siegfried Sassoon, in *Picture-Show*

—life is just the picture dancing on a screen.

- ✓ The majority of poets are keenly alive to the transiency of life. Francis Beaumont sees in Westminster Abbey the tombs of a score of kings and lords of wealth

Who now want strength to stir their hands.

In *The Rose of the World* Yeats must needs write that

We and the labouring world are passing by.

According to Sandburg's *Loam* we rise, like a rose leaf, from the "soft warm loam" and stand

To a whiff of life,
 Lifted to the silver of the sun . . .

In Ralph Hodgson's *The Hammers* the same theme is presented in terms of growth and decay:

Noise of hammers once I heard,
Many hammers, busy hammers,
Beating, shaping, night and day,
Shaping, beating dust and clay
To a palace; saw it reared;
Saw the hammers laid away.

And I listened, and I heard
Hammers beating, night and day,
In the palace newly reared,
Beating it to dust and clay:
Other hammers, muffled hammers,
Silent hammers of decay.

Poets are, above all other men, endowed with an active idealism. They are forever pointing us to visionary scenes and situations. Frequently they portray an ideal man, as did Wordsworth in *Character of the Happy Warrior*:

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?

and he replies in part:

'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows;
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors or for worldly state;

Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
 Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
 Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
 Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace;

Among the lyrics of reflection we find numerous suggestions on how to live. According to Sir Edward Dyer, in *My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is*, the mind may supply all that is necessary to man's well-being:

Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
 Content with that my mind doth bring.

If we are looking for the secret to a successful, convincing life, we have not far to seek. Arnold's *Self-Dependence* is one of those poems which we should read and re-read until it has become a part of our everyday thinking. Robert Graves' *Hate Not, Fear Not* is a strong injunction against hate and fear:

Kill if you must, but never hate:
 Man is but grass and hate is blight . . .

In *Prayer* Louis Untermeyer states his ideals of living. He concludes with the petition that God should keep him from "compromise and things half-done" and from "stern and stubborn pride,"

And when, at last, the fight is won,
 God, keep me still unsatisfied.

The reflective lyrics are concerned also with the problem of happiness. Sir Henry Wotton's *Character of a Happy Life*, Henry Howard's *The Means to Attain Happy Life*, and Robert Bridges' *The Idle Life I Live* and *Fortunatus Nimum*—all contribute some suggestions to those seeking a more enjoyable and peaceful life.

Finally, among the reflective lyrics we find utterances of triumph at the end of life. Emerson's *Terminus* and George W. Russell's ("Æ") *When* are good examples. The latter of these springs from a manly courage and a quiet, serene resignation:

When mine hour is come
 Let no teardrop fall
 And no darkness hover
 Round me where I lie.

Let the vastness call
One who was its lover,
Let me breathe the sky.

Where the lordly light
Walks along the world,
And its silent tread
Leaves the grasses bright,
Leaves the flowers uncured,
Let me to the dead
Breathe a gay goodnight.

No writer has ever sounded a more stirring note for the approach of death than Browning. The last stanza in his *Epilogue* reflects his entire life:

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry, 'Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!'

LYRICS OF PATRIOTISM

The mood of patriotism has been a part of literature from the very earliest times. During the Babylonian captivity, over two thousand years ago, the Children of Israel found partial solace in the chanting of lyrics about their own beloved Jerusalem. The Greek *Iliad* and Roman *Aeneid* as well as the German *Nibelungenlied* are enlivened here and there with thoughts of home and pride of race. In England, one of the earliest patriotic lyrics is that of *The Battle of Brunanburh*. This poem celebrates the victory of Aethelstan in 937 over Constantine, King of Scotland, who was allied with the Norwegians and the Strathclyde Welsh. The cruelty and fierceness of these early encounters is realistically described in this war poem in such words as "hewed," "rush of the javelins," "crash of the charges," and in the lines:

Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grindstone,
Fiercely we hacked at the flyers before us.

(translation by Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

Another of these early lyrics, *The Battle of Maldon*, concerns the battle that was fought in 991 between the Danish Unlaf (Olaf Tryggvason) and the English Byrhtnoth at Maldon in Essex, or more particularly at the village of Heybridge near by. The courageous spirit of the poem is best exemplified in the dying words of the old companion Byrhtwold:

The bolder be each heart,
Each spirit sterner, valor more, now that our strength is less!
(translation by H. W. Lumsden)

With the exception of the war poems of Lawrence Minot in the beginning of the fourteenth century, it is not until 1605 that English verse finds its next important expression of the patriotic spirit in Michael Drayton's *To the Cambro-Britons and Their Harp*, which is based upon the battle of Agincourt, fought near the northern coast of France on October 25, 1415. About 50,000 French soldiers under the Constable d'Albret were defeated by Henry V, with about 15,000 men. Though this poem is essentially a ballad, its patriotic tone is interesting in this discussion by way of furnishing a striking comparison to the two foregoing Old English poems. It is to Robert Burns' *Scots Wha Hae* (1794) and Thomas Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England* (1801), however, that we turn for our first notable examples of English patriotic verse, excepting, of course, scattered portions such as the speech of John of Gaunt in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, beginning with the words, "This royal throne of kings."

The patriotic lyric has its origin in primitive self-preservation. When homeland and kindred were in danger of subjugation, the commonality of danger and feeling drew together the spirits of men and called for expression in suitable words. The true patriot has always been esteemed. He must be ready to die for country and for its principles. His blood he pours out freely and unhesitatingly when the safety of his people calls for it. In its purest aspects, the patriotic spirit is ennobling, and approaches a solemnity equal to that of the elegy itself. It signifies the highest altruistic sentiments—that of complete sacrifice of the individual to the well-being of the group.

Patriotic lyrics vary greatly. Not all of them, by any means, are associated with war, as are I. A. Williams' *From a Flemish Graveyard* and W. V. Moody's *On a Soldier Fallen in the*

Philippines. Some are called into being by the poet's reflection upon his native land, possibly when he is on foreign soil, as in the case of Browning's *Home Thoughts from Abroad*. Or, again, the author's interest in the general well-being of his country may urge him to write, as it did Kipling in *Recessional*, and Burns in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. The concern of Burns is unmistakable in such lines as these:

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
 And, oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

We find instances, also, where a poet's devotion to and love for his land called from him a rapturous tribute to her worth and renown, as in Henley's *Pro Rege Nostro*. A certain local section, as well, within a country itself may often be a sufficient incentive for patriotic expression. Hilaire Belloc is stirred by thoughts of his own South Country in *The South Country*:

The great hills of the South Country
 They stand along the sea,
 And it's there, walking in the high woods,
 That I could wish to be,
 And the men that were boys when I was a boy
 Walking along with me.

LYRICS OF SATIRE

The method employed by the satirist is a very old one. Jotham's Parable of the Trees in the ninth chapter of *Judges* is one of the earliest satires of which we have any record. Likewise is satire a widely used device, appearing frequently in conjunction with other forms. Aesop employed the spirit of satire in his famous *Fables*, spoken sometime between 620 and 560 b.c.; a vein of satire is also to be found in Dante's great epic

poem, *The Divine Comedy*; Cervantes, the Spanish novelist, weaves the satiric thread into the fabric of his romance, *Don Quixote*; Molière, the French comic dramatist, and Shakespeare frequently use satire with biting severity in their dramatic treatment of the foibles of human kind and of historical incidents and personages.

For a definite beginning of satiric verse, however, we must go back to the Roman poet Lucilius, who lived in the second century before Christ. He is the first to write satires which conform to our modern understanding of the form. Because of the variety in subjects and meters, his satires partake of the nature of medleys; but through these medleys runs a pronounced element of censure. With modern satire there is of course associated only the element of censure, the idea of medley having been completely dropped. The satires of Lucilius (c.180-103 B.C.), together with those of the Romans, Horace (65-8 B.C.) and Juvenal (A.D. 55-125), and of the Greek Lucian (A.D. 210-280) constitute the earliest of real satiric pieces. The influence of Horace and Juvenal is particularly strong. Their writings have served as models for the great bulk of verse satire in European literature.

In England, the satiric lyric took its rise in the latter part of the twelfth century with John de Hauteville's *Architrenius* and Nigel Wireker's *Speculum Stultorum*. The former laments the vices of the age; the latter is a satirical allegory directed against the monks of the period. During the Middle Ages the satire was chiefly concerned with two great objects, women and monastic orders. In the thirteenth century the good-humored *The Land of Cockayne* pictures an ideal heaven for the monks, a place where gluttons and lechers find perfect satisfaction. Obviously its arrows were directed against the licentious monks of the day. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the satiric spirit found a place in the writings of such men as William Langland, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Lydgate, Thomas Occleve, Alexander Barclay, and John Skelton. In these earlier periods satire was more or less an incidental matter. This is only partly and others. This century, more than the preceding ones, furnished, John Donne, Joseph Hall, John Marston, George Wither, true of the satiric writers of the sixteenth century, George Gascoigne, a great variety of subjects for satiric treatment. The added

diversity in modes of living and the increased complexity of social life in general presented the opportunity for the parading of such eccentricities of personality as make excellent materials for the satirist.

For twenty-five or more years following the end of James I's reign (1625) the satiric lyric suffered almost entire eclipse. However, with the restoration of Charles II in 1660 the golden age of satire was ushered in. The first to captivate the king and his courtiers was Samuel Butler's hilarious *Hudibras* (1663). It was exceedingly clever; captivating phrases and comic rhymes made it such a favorite of the king's that he is said to have committed it to memory. Butler drew the portrait of Hudibras very painstakingly. We see a corpulent, "stooped-back" individual, with a tawny beard, "long hair," dressed in a "doublet of sturdy buff," "breeches of rugged woollen," a "puissant sword" hanging at his side, two pistols in holsters at his saddle-bow, and seated on a horse, distinguished mostly for what he lacked. "Whether he were more wise or stout," seems to have been questionable. Hudibras is the representative of the foibles of the Presbyterian party. His squire, Ralph, typifies the Independents. The arguing that takes place between them is so contrived as to exhibit in a most unfavorable light the schisms that rent asunder the Parliamentary party. The hostile picture of a religious, political, and social age is adequately portrayed in these two leading characters, and ridiculed in their reciprocal reaction. What Butler wished to satirize was not Puritan morality, but ecclesiastical tyranny; not chivalrous honor in its spiritual essence, but a modern adaptation of it; not chivalrous love, but its absurd application to a society quite unadapted for its reception.

The corrupt and licentious court of Charles II together with the lax and frivolous tone of society in general, beyond that of the preceding age, presented conditions favorable to the development of satiric literature. Where poetry, as in this instance, concerned itself with the artificial aspects of cultivated men and women, the elemental emotions and the ruddy imagination had to recede; so that the satiric verse for the next century grew out of those standards which the minds of men had set for themselves, namely moderation, common sense, and politeness.

Two poets tower far above the others in this great age of satiric lyrics, John Dryden and Alexander Pope. Dryden's mas-

terpieces are *Absalom and Achitophel* and *MacFlecknoe*. The first of these poems is an attack upon Lord Shaftesbury (Achitophel) for his part in the attempt to exclude the Duke of York from the throne as a papist, and to place the succession upon the Duke of Monmouth (Absalom). The theme was therefore of some consequence. Was King Charles' Catholic brother to be the future ruler, or the king's (reputed) son, Monmouth, who would in that eventuality be but a mere puppet for the alert Shaftesbury? At the time the poem was being written, Monmouth was awaiting his trial for high treason. It is altogether probable that the king incited Dryden to its composition. *Absalom and Achitophel* contains a set of excellent portraits. The first part of this poem has never been surpassed by any other English verse satire. Dryden has the faculty of injecting vigor and conviction into his lines. He makes a direct cut; he comes out in the open for the fight, and asks for no mercy. Dryden's satires, though directed at individuals, often take on a dignity and universality which redeem them from pettiness. The frailty of human beings in general is derided, as well as that of the Duke of Buckingham in the following lines:

A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.

The greatest handicap to the poem for us today is its references to contemporary persons and events, which more and more require a commentary for full comprehension.

Although Dryden was followed by a group of brilliant satirists, such (in prose) as Steele, Addison, and Defoe, it is to Alexander Pope that we next turn for a poetic figure worthy of being placed on the same level with, if not above, Dryden. With Pope, English satire reached its highest metrical perfection. He was adapted to the art of ridicule. Mental briskness and sparkling wit, coupled with a metrical dexterity, enabled him to turn out phrases and couplets that were remarkable for their polish and precision. The gamut of his satiric power ran from that of a playful caprice to a righteous indignation. When he so desired, Pope could give a death blow. His quarrels were chiefly personal. His own side was the only one he cared to see. Despite Addison's genial qualities as man and author, Pope would have damned him to a place among the curs:

but were there one whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,
Blessed with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne;
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;
Dreading even fools; by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause:
While Wits and Templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

This instance of malevolent satire from the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* is a good example of Pope at his best. This is paralleled, however, by satire of a different order in the mock-epic

The Rape of the Lock and the *Dunciad*. In the latter, Pope has become mean enough to look with malignity upon the minor authors of his day who were reduced to the necessity of writing for their bread. Despite this unelevated point of view, and the many portions offensive alike to good breeding and charity, Pope gives us poetry of a superior and non-satiric order at the end of the poem,

In vain, in vain—the all-composing Hour
 Resistless falls: the use obeys the Power.
 She comes! she comes! the sable Throne behold
 Of *Night* primæval and of *Chaos* old!
 Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
 And all its varying Rain-bows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
 The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
 As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
 The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
 As Argus' eyes by Hermes' wand oppress,
 Closed one by one to everlasting rest;
 Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after *Art* goes out, and all is Night.
 See skulking *Truth* to her old cavern fled,
 Mountains of Casuistry heaped o'er her head!
Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
 Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of *Metaphysic* begs defence,
 And *Metaphysic* calls for aid on *Sense*!
 See *Mystery* to *Mathematics* fly!
 In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares *Morality* expires.
 Nor public *Flame*, nor *private*, dares to shine;
 Nor *human* Spark is left, nor Glimpse *divine*!
 Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restored;
 Light dies before thy uncreated word;
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
 And universal Darkness buries All.

Pope had many followers, among them Edward Young, John Gay, Samuel Johnson, William Cowper, George Crabbe, and

Oliver Goldsmith, whose *Retaliation* still holds a place in eighteenth century lyrics of satire. A new type of satire, however, was making its appearance. With the forces of Romanticism came such softer ironic pieces as Burns' *Address to the Unco Guid* and *Holy Willie's Prayer*. When we come to the nineteenth century poets, Lord Byron is not only the best of them but the latest of England's great verse satirists. Like Pope, he generally had a personal injury to revenge in his satires. The ruling passion, with him, was anger. Those who criticized either his poetry or his morals came in for their share of punishment. When living abroad he did not hesitate to deride kings and ministers. He was at his best when denouncing English society in general and the English aristocrats who ejected him from their association. Byron had an uncanny vitality. This helped to give zest and moment to his raillery. No other poet ever laughed more sardonically in his poetry. He lacked the causticity of Dryden and the dexterity of Pope; but the personality of neither of these was so impressively transfused into their satires as that of Byron in his masterpieces, *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment*.

If we examine the ages in England or in other countries which gave birth to a preponderance of satiric lyrics, we shall find that they were artificial. Verse satire usually grows up out of certain conventions, whether associated with the practices of the church, with the institution of chivalry, or with the ethical standards of kings and governments. The satirist reveals the customs as well as the intellectual qualities of his age.

The methods used by the various satirists are strikingly similar. They all proceed in the negative manner; that is, they point out the abuses and weaknesses but usually suggest no remedy. Their chief weapon is ridicule. At its best, their purpose is to expose error, folly, sham, hypocrisy, and vice in order that truth may be revealed. Satire reaches its highest level when this exposure is made with good sense, wit, humor, and by adherence to artistic form. Reason can thus wield a powerful weapon when it attacks ignorance and pretension with ridicule. Virtue cannot make itself felt with greater certainty than by employing the shafts of irony against its sworn enemies, injustice, falsehood, and affectation.

At the basis of satire lies the presence, in society, of the incon-

gruous. The goals which men set for themselves are ever far beyond their grasp. What they actually do falls far short of what they profess. The satirist notices this discrepancy and is tempted to voice it. The impulse to represent this divergency between what should be and what actually is largely accounts for the distinct moral element in satiric lyrics. In so far as satiric poetry attempts to weigh human emotions and then to destroy what is foul and unlovely, base and degrading, and to uphold what is worthy and exemplary, it performs a truly noble function in society. Its great contribution consists in tearing down that which thwarts progress. Here, though, lies the greatest danger of the satiric lyric as a work of literature—that of directing its energy wholly into the field of ethics, and thus of excluding its produce from the field of poetry as art. True satiric poetry must be more a mirror than a teacher; a reflecting voice rather than a preacher.

In verse satire as such the intellectual element plays a prominent part. The ability to be clever tactfully, dexterous in the handling of phrase, deft in the manipulation of personal eccentricities—all emanate from the mind rather than the heart; likewise the ability to polish and compress, to select the proper word to carry out the most incisive effects. The intellectual element, admirable and essential as it is, dare not rise too high, however, if the result is to remain within the domain of true poetry. For poetry, as art, is more than an ingenious mental exercise, or a rhetorical explosion.

Since many satirical lyrics are concerned with passing personages and events, the element of obscurity overtakes some of them sooner or later; for the succeeding generations must more and more employ a key to insure proper interpretation. This is particularly true of such poems as *Absalom and Achitophel*, the *Dunciad* and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. This is not true of those satires which are based upon universal or typical traits, or which sound a note that may be heard in every human heart, as in Burns' *Address to the Unco Guid*, Browning's *Tray*, or Hardy's *The Man He Killed*.

An examination of the various lyrics of satire reveals two chief classes, from the standpoint of the mood which actuates them. First, there are those in which the raillery proceeds in good humor. The poet controls his temper perfectly while ex-

posing his enemy by insinulative laughter or derisive thrusts, as does Goldsmith in *Retaliation*. The second type of satiric lyric is more bitter and vindictive. Its denunciations arise in a deep-seated indignation, as in Byron's *The Vision of Judgment*. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the subject satirized, we find that satires may be directed at some political situation, as in Lowell's *Jonathan to John*, or aimed at some person, as in Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* or Whittier's *Ichabod*. Sometimes, as in Defoe's *The True-Born Englishman*, the poet assails some social custom; or as Dryden, in *The Hind and Panther*, some institution. Those verse satires that use society in general as their target are numerous, of which Hood's *The Song of the Shirt*, Byron's *Don Juan*, and Clough's *The Latest Decalogue* are famous examples.

LYRICS OF RELIGION

The first astonishing fact about the lyrics of religion is their antiquity. From the first dawn of human intelligence man has instinctively sought to ally himself with a superior being. All the earliest extant religious poetry has in common this reaching-out of the human soul for spiritual satisfaction. We have poetic expressions of men's innate yearning as early as 2000 B.C. in the Babylonian *Psalms to the Goddess Anunit* and the Assyrian *Hymn to Marduk*. A little later, about 1700 B.C., the Egyptians were already chanting their hymns to Amen Ra, the Sun God. The East Indian people were probably using their sacred Veda as early as 1500 B.C. Apparently by the eighth century B.C., the Hebrews were already contributing their idea of Jehovah to the stream of the world's religious literatures. All along the avenue of subsequent centuries we hear strains of religious lyrics. They are audible, for instance, in Seneca and Sophocles in the fourth century B.C., in Clement of Alexandria in the first century A.D., and in St. Patrick of the fourth century. From this time forward the lyrical voices became more numerous; the Venerable Bede, Saint Francis of Assisi, and King Robert of France are among those whose poetic strains of religion, between the fourth and tenth centuries, have fallen pleasingly upon the ears of succeeding generations.

Although the oriental religions and the modern cults use

different terms, they yet are in search of the same realities. Man's craving for food and love is not more legitimate or fundamental than his hunger for God, whether it be for the Assyrian Asshur and Ishtar, the Egyptian Mut and Khonsu, the Indian Brahma and Siva, the Greek Zeus and Apollo, or the Christian God and Jesus. Religion is the most inescapable of all the interests that have engaged man's attention. It is likewise the most vigorous and most stimulating. To be religious is to be in harmony with the most persistent trait that has characterized man in his intellectual and emotional activity.

When we observe the literatures of the remote past, we shall notice that they are essentially religious. The power of survival is of course the chief test of great literature, excepting instances where manuscripts were destroyed accidentally or burned by victorious bands. In general, however, the people safeguard what they prize. Much of this went into their bibles. The form that a great portion of this treasured literature assumes is poetic in nature. The Hebrews must originally have had a vast amount of writings on various subjects; but that which took precedence in survival value was religious in nature, as instanced in our *Old Testament* and *Apocrypha*. It is a singular illustration of the tendency of people to treasure that which ministers to their spiritual natures. Not only this, but they doubtless took more pains in elevating the style so as to conform with the sacredness of the theme. We find in the *Old Testament* such matchless poetry as that in *Job*, *Psalms*, and *Proverbs*.

It is safe to say that the Bible is the greatest anthology of religious poetry that we now possess. A perusal of religious verse since the earliest Christian era reveals little that is not influenced by the Biblical material. The Bible stimulated a vast body of writings, varying from the historical and doctrinal to the devotional.

The influence upon the artists is for us the most interesting. The greatest artists have generally chosen a religious theme or purpose for their greatest masterpieces, whether it be in painting, architecture, sculpture, music, or poetry. This observation leads us to surmise that the artistic mind is, at its best, basically religious. The world is infinitely richer for this collection of diversified religious art. It rises beyond the sermonic and the creedal and instead reflects upon the supreme ideas of life and death.

Religious poetry is at its best when it rises from a sense of personal relationship to Deity and not from a devotion to sect or doctrine. The best religious lyrics are those which ignore rule and convention and seek the free and open spaces of the heart. They are direct and spontaneous. Emily Dickinson, among the nineteenth century poets, has the facility of this self-abandonment, as may be seen in the following poem, entitled *The Chariot*:

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves,
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure, too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling in the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then, 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Innumerable so-called religious lyrics are inferior because of their lack of the foregoing essentials, or because of the inclusion of such extraneous ideas as relate themselves to some pet denominational characteristics. Poetic art does not lend itself to "axe-grinding." The temptation on the part of the poet to advocate something not strictly his own is, if yielded to, disastrous to his highest attainments. The poet must be himself and reveal his own inner feelings. The writing of religious lyrics should come natural to every true poet; but William Cowper realized, as we do, the scarcity of great lyrics devoted entirely to religion:

Pity, Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!
The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
And every muse attend her on her way.

We have already referred to the universality of the religious mood and to the great works of art springing out of that unevadable theme. The religious temperament is found most happily in compound with and co-ordinating other moods. This is highly complimentary to the religious element. Its greatness lies in the fact that it is thus immeshed within the fabric of most great poems. There are, however, certain lyrics which have as their chief end the expression of a religious idea or feeling. These are the poems that we designate as *lyrics of religion*. They are to be found in every period of English and American literatures, varying greatly in degrees of excellency. Even the satirical Pope wrote a religious lyric of merit in *The Universal Prayer*. We get a different conception of this master of irony when we read such lines from his poem as

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe.

If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, Oh, teach my heart
To find the better way!

Save me alike from foolish pride,
And impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quickened by thy breath;
Oh, lead me whereso'er I go,
Through this day's life or death.

The seventeenth century in England produced the best school of religious lyrists in the persons of John Donne, George Herbert, Robert Herrick, Henry Vaughan, and Thomas Traherne. The twentieth century, because of its renunciation of tradition and its general freedom, gives promise of approaching the seventeenth in the purity and unaffectedness of its religious lyrics.

It is inevitable that the poets should look at religion from various points of view. We hear strains of sorrow, sin, failure, inquiry, and hope. Many a poem gropes after the idea of God, as does Coleridge's *Religious Musings*. In *Music* Emerson sees God in nature; while Arnold is concerned with God in man's everyday life in *Calm Soul of All Things*. There are successful searchers after God, as Bliss Carman in *Vestigia* and puzzled inquirers as W. R. Benét in *The Falconer of God*. Faith is a much-used theme, as in Anne Brontë's *The Doubter's Prayer*; and numerous lyrics come to us in the form of prayer, Howells' *A Prayer* and John Drinkwater's *A Prayer* being typical instances. In *If All the Skies* Henry Van Dyke offers solace to the weary and discouraged; while Leigh Hunt, in *About Ben Adhem*, presents suggestions for the proper ordering of a religious life. Death is of necessity an important and popular note, as in Maltbie Babcock's *Death* and Henley's *Margaritae Sorori*; and of lyrics on the theme of life after death we have excellent examples in Raleigh's *My Pilgrimage* and Vaughan's *Peace*.

QUESTIONS

1. What particular phase of love does the poet voice in each of the following?

John Donne: *The Indifferent*

Richard Lovelace: *To Lucasta, On Going to the Wars*

Robert Burns: *Highland Mary*

William Blake: *Love's Secret*

Edgar Allan Poe: *The Raven*

Robert Browning: *Song: My Star*

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: *The Blessed Damozel*

Austin Dobson: *To Daffodils*

Thomas Hardy: *The Sigh*

Robert Bridges: *"I Will Not Let Thee Go"*

William Butler Yeats: *The Lover Tells of the Rose in His Heart*

2. Explain fully what Richard Wagner meant by the following lines:

The secret, mysterious relations of the human heart to the strange nature around it, have not yet come to an end. In its eloquent silence, this latter still speaks to the heart just as it did a thousand years ago; and what was told in the very gray of antiquity is understood to-day as easily as then. For this reason it is that the legend of *nature* ever remains the inexhaustible resource of the poet in his intercourse with his people.

3. Contrast the following poems on Nightingale:

Sir Philip Sidney: *Song: The Nightingale*

Lady Winchilsea: *To the Nightingale*

Matthew Arnold: *Philomela*

Robert Bridges: *Nightingales*

4. What idea suggests itself to each of the following poets as he listens to the song of the lark?

William Wordsworth: *To a Sky-Lark*

Percy Bysshe Shelley: *To a Skylark*

George Meredith: *The Lark Ascending*

5. Try to ascertain just how each of the following poets reacts upon the flower before him. What is the author's attitude toward nature in each instance?

Robert Herrick: *To Daffodils*

Edmund Waller: *Go, Lovely Rose*

Philip Freneau: *The Wild Honeysuckle*

Robert Burns: *To a Mountain Daisy*

William Wordsworth: *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

William Cullen Bryant: *To a Fringed Gentian*

Ralph Waldo Emerson: *The Rhodora*

James Russell Lowell: *To a Dandelion*

Austin Dobson: *To Daffodils*

6. Write synopses of William Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* and of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Give particular attention to Wordsworth's attitude toward nature and to Coleridge's modification of Wordsworth's theory.
7. What does *night* mean to each of the following poets?
William Blake: *Night*

William Collins: *Ode to Evening*

Percy Bysshe Shelley: *To Night*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: *Hymn to the Night*

8. Compare what each of the following writers has to say about Shakespeare:

Ben Jonson: *To the Memory of My Beloved Master William Shakespeare*

John Milton: *On Shakespeare*

Matthew Arnold: *Shakespeare*

9. Write an essay on Happiness, drawing your ideas from the following:

Sir Henry Wotton: *Character of a Happy Life*

Henry Howard: *The Means to Attain Happy Life*

John Milton: *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*

Sir Edward Dyer: *My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is*

Matthew Arnold: *Self-Dependence*

Robert Bridges: *Fortunatus Nimium*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox: *Attainment*

Edward Carpenter: *The Stupid Old Body*

The Wandering Lunatic Mind

John Bunyan: *The Shepherd Boy Sings*

John Vance Cheney: *The Happiest Heart*

Sam Walter Foss: *The House By the Side of the Road*

Thomas Carlyle: *Today*

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: *Resolve*

Alice Cary: *My Creed*

Adelaide Anne Proctor: *The Present*

10. Make a study of Empedocles' philosophy of life in Arnold's "Empedocles' Song" from *Empedocles on Etna*.

11. Contrast the attitude toward life as set forth in

Robert Browning: *Prospice*

Edward Fitzgerald: *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

Arthur Hugh Clough: *Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth*

William Henry Davies: *Leisure*

Alfred Edward Housman: *Think No More, Lad*

12. What differences, if any, do you notice in the patriotic spirit as reflected in such Revolutionary War lyrics as

The Pennsylvania Song (1775)

Bold Hawthorne (1775)

Francis Hopkinson: *The Battle of the Kegs (1778)*
and that which is mirrored in the following Civil War poems:

George F. Root: *The Battle Cry of Freedom (1861)*

James R. Randall: *Maryland! My Maryland! (1861)*

Julia Ward Howe: *Battle-Hymn of the Republic (1862)*

Henry Clay Work: *Marching Through Georgia (1864)*

What changes have taken place with the increase in the complexity of living and of social emotions?

13. As civilization advances and as the machinery of war becomes more intricate, would you expect to find that these affect the patriotic spirit? Consult the following with this in mind:

Anonymous: *The Battle of Brunanburh (937)*

Michael Drayton: *To the Cambro-Britons and Their Harp (1605)*

Thomas Campbell: *Ye Mariners of England (1801)*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights (1842)*

Iolo Aneurin Williams: *From a Flemish Graveyard (1915)*

14. What is the mood of the poet in each of the following lyrics of satire:

Alexander Pope: *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*

Robert Burns: *Holy Willie's Prayer*

James Russell Lowell: *The Pious Editor's Creed*

Robert Browning: *The Lost Leader*

Alfred Edward Housman: *As I Gird on for Fighting*

15. As an illustration of how eminent poets insert religious materials which reflect acquaintance with the Bible, examine the following:

(a) Read from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

He that doth the ravens feed,
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,
Be comfort to my age!

and then consult Matthew 10:29 and Luke 12:6, 24.

(b) Read from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*:

We do pray for mercy,
And that same power doth teach us to render
The deeds of mercy;

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

From *Richard II*:

I pardon him, as God shall pardon me

From *Henry VIII*:

I as free forgive you
As I would be forgiven; I forgive all.

and then consult Matthew 5:7; 6:12, 14, 15; and
18:21-35; Luke 6:36; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians, 3:13;
James 2:13.

- (c) Read from Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*:

We must do good against evil

From *Richard III*:

God bids us do good for evil;

A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe to us;

Charity renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

and then consult Matthew 5:39, 44; Luke 6:27, 28;
Romans 12:14, 20, 21; I Peter 3:9

16. In about one hundred words, write out an interpretation of Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*.
17. Consider lines 153-208 in Book V of Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a lyric of religion.
18. Wherein does Henry Vaughan's strength lie as a writer of religious lyrics? Read in this connection such of his poems as the following:

The World

Peace

Fragment

The World of Light

The Pilgrimage

19. Test the plausibility of the following statement by Lyof Tolstoi, taken from *What Is Art*:

The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one's neighbor, now attained only by the best members of society, the customary feeling and the instinct of all men. By evoking, under imaginary conditions, the feeling of brotherhood and love, religious art will train men to experience those same feelings under similar circumstances in actual life; it will lay in the souls of men the rails along which the actions of those whom art thus educates will naturally pass. And universal art, by uniting the most different people in one common feeling, by destroying separation, will educate people to union, will show them, not by reason, but by life itself, the joy of universal union reaching beyond the bounds set by life.

20. What suggestions does Ralph Waldo Emerson give in the following extract regarding the poet's relation to and use of the world of nature about him:

The poet alone knows astronomy, chemistry, vegetation, and animation; for he does not stop at these facts, but employs them as signs. He knows why the plain or meadow of space was strown with these flowers we call suns and moons and stars; why the great deep is adorned with animals, with men, and gods; for in every word he speaks he rides on them as the horses of thought.

Genius is the activity which repairs the decays of things whether wholly or partly of a material and finite kind. Nature, through all her kingdoms, insures herself. . . . She makes a man: and having brought him to ripe age, she will no longer run the risk of losing this wonder at a blow, but she detaches from him a new self, that the kind may be safe from accidents to which the individual is exposed. So when the soul of the poet has come to ripeness of thought, she detaches and sends away from it its poems or songs,—a fearless, sleepless, deathless progeny, which is not exposed to the accidents of the weary kingdom of time: a fearless, vivacious offspring, clad with wings (such was the virtue of the soul out of which they came), which carry them fast and far, and infix them irrevocably into the hearts of men.

EXAMPLES

LYRICS ON LOVE

English:

Anonymous: Alysoun

There Is a Lady Sweet and Kind

Sir Thomas Wyatt: An Earnest Suit to His Unkind Mistress
Not to Forsake HimThe Lover Beseecheth His Mistress Not to Forget His
Steadfast Faith and True Intent

Nicholas Breton: Phyllida and Corydon

Sir Walter Raleigh: The Silent Lover

The Nymph's Reply

Sir Philip Sidney: My True Love Hath My Heart

John Lyly: Cupid and Campaspe

Thomas Lodge: Rosalind's Complaint
Rosaline

Robert Greene: Philomela's Ode

Samuel Daniel: Love Is a Sickness

Thomas Campion: Cherry Ripe

Kind Are Her Answers

My Sweetest Lesbia

Christopher Marlowe: The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

John Donne: The Indifferent

The Good Morrow

Present in Absence

Robert Herrick: To Althea, Who May Command Him Any-
thing

Delight in Disorder

Edmund Waller: On a Girdle

Go, Lovely Rose

Thomas Carew: Ask Me No More

Disdain Returned

Richard Lovelace: To Lucasta, Going to the Wars

To Althea, from Prison

Andrew Marvell: The Definition of Love

William Congreve: Pious Selinda

Charles Sackville: The Advice

William Cowper: To Mary

William Blake: Love's Secret

Robert Burns: Of A' the Airts the Wind Can Blow

'Ae Fond Kiss

A Red, Red Rose

John Anderson, My Jo

Highland Mary

George Gordon, Lord Byron: "She Walks in Beauty"

"When We Two Parted"

So, We'll Go No More A Roving

Fare Thee Well

Percy Bysshe Shelley: To— (One Word is too Often Profaned)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: "Ask Me No More" (From *The Princess*)

"Come Into the Garden, Maud" (From *Maud*)

Robert Browning: One Word More

Love Among the Ruins

Coventry Patmore: The Married Lover

Departure

George Meredith: Love in the Valley

Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Match

Love at Sea

Thomas Hardy: The Sigh

Robert Bridges: "Poor Withered Rose and Dry"

"I Will Not Let Thee Go"

Alice Meynell: The Shepherdess

Alfred Edward Housman: The New Mistress

"White in the Moon the Long Road Lies"

William Butler Yeats: The Pity of Love

The Lover Tells of the Rose in His Heart

George Russell ("Æ"): The Gift

Time

American:

John Gould Fletcher: In the Open Air

Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Give All to Love"

Edgar Allan Poe: The Raven

To Helen

George Edward Woodberry: "O, Inexpressible As Sweet"

Sara Teasdale: The Wayfarer

Gifts

Hilda Doolittle (H.D.): Where Love Is King

LYRICS ON NATURE

English:

Anonymous: Cuckoo Song

John Lyly: Trico's Song (From *Alexander and Campaspe*)

Thomas Nash: "Spring, the Sweet Spring" (From *Summer's Last Will and Testament*)

Robert Herrick: Corinna's Going a-Maying
To Daffodils

Lady Winchilsea: To the Nightingale
The Tree

William Blake: To the Evening Star
Night
To Spring

Robert Burns: To a Mountain Daisy
To a Mouse
A Winter Night

William Wordsworth: Lines: Composed a Few Miles above
Tintern Abbey
The Solitary Reaper
To the Cuckoo
"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"
To a Sky-Lark

George Gordon, Lord Byron: Ocean (From *Childe Harold*)

James Stephens: The Snare

Little Things
Chill of the Eve
Etched in Frost

Percy Bysshe Shelley: The Cloud
To the Moon

John Keats: To Autumn

Thomas Lowell Beddoes: To Sea, To Sea

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: A Musical Instrument

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: The Brook

Matthew Arnold: Philomela

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Sea-Limits

Algernon Charles Swinburne: "When the Hounds of Spring
Are on Winter's Traces" (From *Atalanta in Calydon*)

Thomas Hardy: Snow in Suburbs

Robert Bridges: "The Evening Darkens Over"

A Robin

Nightingale

Alfred Edward Housman: "Loveliest of Trees"

Reveille

"We'll to the Woods No More"

William Butler Yeats: "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"

The Wild Swans at Coole

William Henry Davies: Days Too Short

Jenny Wren

American:

Philip Freneau: The Wild Honeysuckle

On a Honey Bee

William Cullen Bryant: A Forest Hymn

To a Fringed Gentian

To a Waterfowl

Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Rhodora

The Humble-Bee

Walt Whitman: Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking

Emily Dickinson: Indian Summer

Sidney Lanier: The Marshes of Glynn

John Bannister Tabb: The Butterfly

Alice Brown: Candlemas

Hamlin Garland: Do You Fear the Wind?

Richard Hovey: The Wander-Lovers

The Sea Gypsy

Amy Lowell: Purple Grackles

Robert Frost: Birches

The Road Not Taken

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Carl Sandburg: Grass

Monotone

Sara Teasdale: Blue Squills

Joyce Kilmer: Trees

John Gould Fletcher: Snow at Sea

LYRICS ON PERSONS

English:

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: Of the Death of Sir Thomas Wyatt

Ben Jonson: To the Memory of My Beloved Master William Shakespeare

John Milton: On Shakespeare

Sir John Denham: On Mr. Abraham Cowley's Death and Burial

John Dryden: Lines Printed Under the Engraved Portrait of Milton

Robert Burns: Epistle to J. Lapraik
Address to the Deil

William Wordsworth: She Was a Phantom of Delight

Walter Savage Landor: To Robert Browning

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Milton
To Virgil
To the Queen

Robert Browning: Memorabilia

Matthew Arnold: Shakespeare
Memorial Verses

Sir Edmund Gosse: With a copy of Herrick

Ralph Hodgson: Eve

Walter De La Mare: Miss Loo

John Masefield: C.L.M.

American:

Thomas William Parsons: On the Bust of Dante

Edwin Arlington Robinson: Flammonde

Miniver Cheevy

Richard Cory

Conrad Aiken: "Dead Cleopatra Lies in a Crystal Casket"

LYRICS ON CHILDHOOD

English:

Henry Vaughan: The Retreat

Matthew Prior: To a Child of Quality

William Blake: The Little Black Boy

The Piper

- A Little Boy Lost
 Algernon Charles Swinburne: Étude Réaliste
 Francis Thompson: A Child's Prayer
 Walter De La Mare: The Truants
 Tired Tim
 Robert Louis Stevenson: Whole Duty of Children (From *A Child's Garden of Verses*)
 Bed in Summer
 Good and Bad Children
 Robert Graves: Babylon

American:

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: The Children's Hour
 Henry Cuyler Bunner: "One, Two, Three"
 Edwin Arlington Robinson: For Arvia, On Her Fifth Birthday
 day
 Thomas Augustine Daly: Leetle Giuseppina
 Carl Sandburg: Helga
 Sara Teasdale: To Dick, on His Sixth Birthday
 Louis Untermeyer: A Side Street
 The Young Mystic
 Nathalia Crane: The Janitor's Boy

LYRICS OF REFLECTION

English:

- Geoffrey Chaucer: Truth
 Gentilesse
 Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: The Means to Attain Happy
 Life
 George Gascoigne: Piers Ploughman
 Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst: Complaint of the Duke
 of Buckingham
 Thomas Nash: Litany in Time of Plague
 Sir Henry Wotton: Character of a Happy Life
 Thomas Campion: The Man of Life Upright
 Sic Transit
 Chance and Change
 John Fletcher: Melancholy
 John Webster: Vanitas Vanitatum

Francis Beaumont: Lines on the Tombs in Westminster
On the Life of Man

Sir William D'Avenant: Praise and Prayer

John Milton: L'Allegro

Il Penseroso

Abraham Cowley: The Wish

Robert Burns: A Man's a Man for A' That

William Wordsworth: Character of the Happy Warrior

Robert Southey: My Days Among the Dead Are Passed

Walter Savage Landor: To Age

John Keats: In a Drear-Nighted December

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Vastness

Edward Fitzgerald: Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

Robert Browning: Rabbi Ben Ezra

Asolando: Epilogue

De Gustibus

Prospice

Arthur Hugh Clough: Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth

Qua Cursum Ventus

Where Lies the Land

Matthew Arnold: Dover Beach

Self-Dependence

Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Cloud Confines

The Sea-Limits

Algernon Charles Swinburne: The Life of Man (From *Atlanta in Calydon*)

Hertha

Thomas Hardy: The Superseded

The Blinded Bird

Robert Bridges: The Idle Life I Live

Fortunatus Nium

William Ernest Henley: Invictus

Sir Edmund Gosse: Lying in the Grass

Alfred Edward Housman: "When I Was One-and-Twenty"

"To an Athlete Dying Young"

"Think No More, Lad"

Rudyard Kipling: L'Envoi

William Butler Yeats: The Rose of the World

A Prayer for My Daughter

Ernest Dowson: Vitae Summa Brevis spem nos Vetat Incohare
Longam

George William Russell: The Twilight of Earth
Truth

A Murmur in the Grass
When

William Henry Davies: Leisure
Money

The Joy of Life

Ralph Hodgson: The Hammers

Walter De La Mare: All That's Past

John Masefield: Biography

Siegfried Sassoon: Picture-Show

Robert Graves: Hate Not, Fear Not

American:

Philip Freneau: On Retirement

Richard Henry Wilde: My Life Is Like the Summer Rose

Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Problem

Each and All

Terminus

Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Chambered Nautilus

The Living Temple

Walt Whitman: Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking

Emily Dickinson: Time's Healing

Edmund Clarence Stedman: "The Undiscovered Country"

Edward Rowland Sill: The Fool's Prayer

Edgar Lee Masters: George Gray

Sara Teasdale: The Voice

Louis Untermeyer: Prayer

Conrad Aiken: "All Lovely Things Will Have an Ending"

LYRICS OF PATRIOTISM

English:

Anonymous: The Battle of Brunanburh

The Battle of Malden

William Collins: "How Sleep the Brave"

Robert Burns: Scots Wha Hae

The Cotter's Saturday Night

Sir Walter Scott: Inniminatus (From the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*)

Thomas Campbell: Ye Mariners of England

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights

You Ask Me Why, Though Ill at Ease

Robert Browning: Home-Thoughts from the Sea

Home-Thoughts from Abroad

William Ernest Henley: Pro Rege Nostro

William Watson: England My Mother

Sir Henry Newbolt: Drake's Drum

Rudyard Kipling: Recessional

William Butler Yeats: Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland

Hilaire Belloc: The South Country

John Masfield: August, 1914

Alfred Noyes: Victory

John Freeman: English Hills

Rupert Brooke: The Old Vicarage, Grantchester

The Soldier

Winifred M. Letts: The Spires of Oxford

American:

Timothy Dwight: Columbia

Philip Freneau: Ode (God Save the Rights of Man)

Fitz-Greene Halleck: Marco Bozzaris

Joseph Rodman Drake: The American Flag

Oliver Wendell Holmes: Old Ironsides

Walt Whitman: "Delicate Cluster! Flag of Teeming Life"

George Edward Woodberry: At Gibraltar

Richard Hovey: Unmanifest Destiny

William Vaughn Moody: On a Soldier Fallen in the Philip-
pines

LYRICS OF SATIRE

English:

Sir John Skelton: Colyn Cloute

Sir Walter Raleigh: The Lie

Samuel Butler: Hudibras

John Dryden: Absalom and Achitophel

Mac Flecknoe

Daniel Defoe: The True-Born Englishman

Alexander Pope: Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot

Dunciad

Oliver Goldsmith: Retaliation

Robert Burns: Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly
Righteous

Holy Willie's Prayer

George Gordon, Lord Byron: Don Juan

Beppo

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers

The Vision of Judgment

Thomas Hood: The Song of the Shirt

Robert Browning: Tray

The Lost Leader

Arthur Hugh Clough: The Latest Decalogue

Thomas Hardy: The Man He Killed

John Davidson: Thirty Bob a Week

Alfred Edward Housman: "On Moonlit Heath and Lonesome
Bank"

"As I Gird on for Fighting"

Oliver Herford: The Bashful Earthquake

Rudyard Kipling: The Vampire

Rubert Brooke: Heaven

American:

John Greenleaf Whittier: Ichabod

James Russell Lowell: Jonathan to John

The Pious Editor's Creed

What Mr. Robinson Thinks

LYRICS OF RELIGION

English:

Sir Walter Raleigh: His Pilgrimage

John Donne: A Hymn to God the Father

Ben Jonson: To Heaven

George Wither: The Prayer of Old Age (From *Hallelujah*)

When We Are Upon the Seas (From *Hallelujah*)

Robert Herrick: His Prayer for Absolution

A Thanksgiving to God for His House

Grace for a Child

To Keep a True Lent

George Herbert: Virtue

Love

The World

The Pulley

The Collar

Richard Crashaw: In the Holy Nativity of Our Lord God

Hymn to St. Teresa

Henry Vaughan: The World

Peace

Fragment

The World of Light

John Bunyan: The Shepherd Boy Sings

John Dryden: "Thus Man by His Own Strength to Heaven
Would Soar" (From *Religio Laici*)

Thomas Traherne: Wonder

Alexander Pope: The Universal Prayer

William Blake: The Divine Image

Robert Burns: A Prayer in the Prospect of Death

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale
of Chamouni

Leigh Hunt: Abou Ben Adhem

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Out in the Fields with God

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: The Higher Pantheism

Proem (From *In Memoriam*)

"O Living Will That Shalt Endure" (From *In Memoriam*)

Crossing the Bar

Robert Browning: "O God, where do they tend—these struggling aims?" (From *Pauline*)

Caliban Upon Setebos

Aubrey De Vere: Reality

Arthur Hugh Clough: With Whom Is No Variableness,
Neither Shadow of Turning

Matthew Arnold: Calm Soul of All Things

Christina Georgina Rossetti: Passing Away

Up-Hill

Wisdom

Trust

Robert Bridges: Vision

William Ernest Henley: Margaritae Sorori

Robert Louis Stevenson: The Celestial Surgeon

William Watson: God-Seeking
 Francis Thompson: The Hound of Heaven
 Mary Elizabeth Coleridge: Our Lady
 William Butler Yeats: An Indian Upon God
 George Russell ("Æ"): Continuity
 The Earth Breath
 Sacrifice
 Ralph Hodgson: The Mystery
 John Masefield: The Seekers
 A Creed
 Siegfried Sassoon: Morning Glory
 Robert Graves: In the Wilderness

American:

Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Bohemian Hymn
 Music
 John Greenleaf Whittier: The Over-Heart
 Margaret Fuller: Dryad Song
 James Russell Lowell: God Is Not Dumb (From *Bibliolaters*)
 Emily Dickinson: Thirst
 Some Keep Sunday Going to Church
 The Chariot
 The Child's Question
 Helen Hunt Jackson: Doubt
 James Whitcomb Riley: Away
 Henry Van Dyke: If All the Skies
 Mary Carolyn Davies: Feet
 Edwin Markham: Revelation
 William Herbert Carruth: Each in His Own Tongue
 Bliss Carman: Vestigia
 Veni Creator
 Edwin Arlington Robinson: Credo
 Arthur Guiterman: In the Hospital
 Vachel Lindsay: "The Hope of Their Religion" (From *The Congo*)
 I Heard Immanuel Singing
 General William Booth Enters Into Heaven
 John Gneisenau Neihardt: Prayer for Rain
 Sara Teasdale: Mystery
 Ezra Pound: Night Litany
 William Rose Benét: The Falconer of God

POETIC DRAMA

If a poem introduces more story than is necessary to reveal the circumstances and the conditions which give rise to the emotion of the poem, it is a narrative poem. When a poem restricts itself to a simple and direct presentation of an emotion for its own sake, it takes on the essential aspects of a lyric. Whenever, in a poem, the characters themselves are represented as being present and as relating by speech, gesture, and action a conflict between man and some other force, we have poetic drama. It is more systematically organized than either narrative or lyric poetry.

The dramatic instinct is inborn, and therefore a thing of universal possession. Children early display mimicking tendencies. Brander Matthews relates the amusing anecdote of three little boys who were "playing automobile." The eldest played the part of chauffeur, the second was the machine, and baby, trudging along in the rear, represented the escaping gasoline fumes from the exhaust pipe. This instinct to impersonate is so deeply rooted that it continues with the individual throughout life. Instead of playing "soldier" or "Indian" himself, however, the grown man satisfies this desire of his nature by watching the actors on the stage doing it for him. This impersonation, even though performed through the imaginative sympathy of the observer, releases his personality and intensifies the experiences of life. It enables him to live through certain emotions that he might otherwise never have felt. Thus to enlarge the horizon of his experiences and to widen the bound of personality is always a source of gratification.

HISTORY

Since the fondness for impersonation is so innately a part of human nature, it is but natural that for an origin of drama we should have to go back to the pantomimic dances of primitive

ances. At a time when these people were as yet unable to produce either narrative or lyric poetry, they could nevertheless already engage in some kind of spectacle which, though devoid of spoken dialogue, was however essentially dramatic. This inclination toward dramatic display which primitive tribes have in common invariably grew out of religious ceremonies. What is true of primitive races can likewise be said of the classical drama, which had its beginning with religious rites of the half-savage Greeks. Though dramatic episodes are to be found in such portions of Hebrew literature as the story of Joseph, Absalom's death, Jehu's revolt, Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, and, above all, in the dramatic parable of *Job*, still it is to the Greeks that we must turn for a beginning of that dramatic poetry which has, through Rome, influenced the English drama.

The Greek drama proper arose in connection with the worship of Dionysus, or Bacchus, the god of wine and of all the resources of vitality. At first the worship of this god took the form of simple choric dances around the altar of Dionysus. Later were introduced two groups of dancers, between whom antiphonal responses were carried on. Gradually, at the suggestion of Thespis, a single actor replaced one of the choruses, enabling them to act out the adventures of Dionysus. With this innovation the drama was born. About 534 B.C. Pisistratus, the tyrant of Athens, instituted the feast of the City Dionysia, the most impressive of the festivals in honor of Bacchus. It came annually in March, and was held in the great theater of Dionysus, on the southern slope of the Acropolis. At this festival tragedies were given in competition for a prize.

Among those who competed, we shall mention four. Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), the oldest of the group, introduced a second actor. Now two actors were on the stage. With the aid of the chorus they could present a reasonably complicated story. *Prometheus Bound* and *Agamemnon* are good examples of this dramatist's work. Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) added a third actor. For perfection in dramatic art he has not his equal among the Greeks. His *Oedipus*, *King of Thebes*, and *Antigone* are two of his immortal contributions. The growing skepticism of the age is reflected in the *Electra* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* of the third tragic dramatist, Euripides (480-407 B.C.). Greek comedy, which owes its origin

to the frolics of disguised rustics at the spring and harvest festivals, was first given public recognition in 465 B.C., and is best represented by Aristophanes (448-385 B.C.) who took a keen delight in satirizing the Athenian life and thought of his day in such plays as *The Frogs* and *The Birds*.

The Roman conquerors inherited the Greek drama as it had inherited other elements of Greek art and thought. Rome had tragedies and comedies of its own; but the Roman drama did not possess any literary value until it was modeled after the Greek productions. At least three times a year the city of Rome staged plays in theaters which were patterned after those of Dionysus. The comedies of Plautus (c.254-184 B.C.), such as *The Captives* and *Menoechme* were based upon Greek originals and are especially important for their influence upon the Elizabethan dramatists. Terence's (c.184-c.159 B.C.) comedies, *Andria* and *Hecyra*, and Seneca's (c.3 B.C.-65 A.D.) *Phaedra* and *Medea* are all imitations of Greek plays. The love of luxury and pleasure and a growing laxity in the moral tone of the Roman people brought on a declining taste and decaying culture which, in turn, eventually brought the plays to an indecent and vulgar end. Christian hostility together with the coming of the Lombards in 568 snuffed out the last flickering blaze of theatrical activity. Thereafter nothing was seen of the theater for many centuries.

LITURGICAL PLAYS

Whether some of these Roman actors became numbered among the strolling players of the Middle Ages who entertained in market-places, village greens, and castle yards we cannot say definitely. This much is certain, the wandering minstrels constituted an important part of the Middle Ages. They were welcomed for the entertainment they furnished—for the folksongs they sang and the legends which they recited. It is altogether likely that they furnish a connecting link between the drama of Greece and Rome and that of later Europe; and it is even probable that they entered England after the Norman conquest. Be that as it may, the old drama ceased absolutely; and the new European drama had a beginning of its own, as the Greek drama had had, at the foot of the altar. Strange it is that the church both helped to crush the old and to raise the new. The same

dramatic instinct which it had hitherto found as a symbol of corruption in the midst of a debased society it now regarded as a helpful agency in the church's hands. So it happened that in connection with the celebration of the Mass, the cathedrals in France, Germany, and England witnessed a rebirth of the drama.

Some maintain that the seed of the modern drama was sown when, in the seventh century, St. Ambrose of Milan introduced antiphonal singing into the church litany. This responsive singing, it is true, strongly suggested dramatic dialogue. In the ninth century additions were made to the liturgy of the European church in the form of additional texts and especially of processions and pageantry. The effect of these pageants and elaborate vestments upon the worshipers was gratifying to the church authorities. So pleased were the clergy with the expressions of delight and wonder in the faces of the beholders that they added, in the latter part of the century, additional texts in the form of dialogue, called tropes. These Latin playlets (we might call them such) were collected into the choir books. In form, the tropes were essentially acted dialogues, presenting a story of the risen Christ. With the appearance of these tropes came modern drama. The earliest preserved trope in European literature is the famous *Quem Quaeritis*, preserved in the Benedictine Abbey of St. Gall, in Switzerland. In Joseph Q. Adams' *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramatists* the following translation is given:

OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

Question [of the angels]:

Whom seek ye in the sepulchre, O followers of Christ?

Answer [Of the Marys]:

Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified, O celestial ones.

[The angels]:

He is not here; he is risen, just as he foretold.

Go, announce that he is risen from the sepulchre.

A suggestion of the general effect which *Quem Quaeritis* had upon the audience may be gleaned from Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester's directions for the *Quem Quaeritis* ceremony. Though Easter received at first the most important consideration, it was not long before Christmas also demanded attention. Naturally

enough, the success attendant upon the performances of these two scenes from the life of Christ suggested to the church dramatists the desirability of showing graphically certain events in the history of man leading up to and following the death of Christ. Eventually the dramatization of Scripture was expanded to include events ranging from the Creation of Adam and Eve to the Last Judgment. Hand in hand with this extension of the subject matter there developed a more elaborately organized play. This is made clear when contrasting the simple *Quem Quaeritis* with the later miracle plays, *Magi* and *Herodes*, both based upon the story of Christ, and with *Conversio Beati Pauli Apostoli* and *Adeodatus*, which derived their themes from the various legends of Saints.

MIRACLE PLAYS

We shall leave our discussion of the European drama in general and focus our attention now upon the English drama itself. The church could not easily go beyond this point in its dramatic presentations. It had to restrict itself to Scriptural themes and to the Latin language. Several church playlets like *The Sepulchre* and *The Wayfarers* were, it is true, given in the vernacular; but they were exceptions, and came late in the period of church supervision. Secular elements did gradually creep in. The people learned to love the drama. They finally desired it, not only as a form of religious service, but also as an entertainment. This tendency toward secularizing the drama conflicted with the reverential atmosphere in which it was necessary to garb these plays. The church found it increasingly difficult to care for the large crowds who came to witness the plays; and its supply of actors among its own clergy was more and more inadequate. The time had seemingly arrived when the drama had to leave the church, especially if it was to develop dramatically. The edict of Pope Innocent III in 1210, ordering the dramas outside the church, was a turning point. This action came at a time when other art-crafts were likewise passing out of the church.

This change was not made in a day. It required several centuries, roughly from 1100 to 1300, to take the drama out of the church, to introduce the vernacular, and to substitute townspeople as actors instead of the priests and clerks. As these changes were

in progress, the plays grew more and more away from their original purpose as part of a religious service. After the church relinquished its hold, the drama continued its development under the trade guilds, or companies of those engaged in various trades; and the plays came to be known as *Miracle* or *Mystery* plays. A distinction is sometimes made between these two terms; but for most purposes the term *Miracle Play* suffices to represent that which the guilds produced. What is essential to notice is that with the trade guilds the drama started on a new period of development. Up to this point, the English drama was essentially the same as that of continental Europe. Henceforth there was a parting of the ways; and England developed the drama along its own individualistic lines.

Under the guilds, the various versions of church dramas were developed, and were brought together into *cycles*, a term used to designate a whole group of individual playlets which went to make up a continuous Bible story. The individual performances or pageants of some of these cycles are still in existence. The *Chester* cycle with its twenty-five pageants, the *Towneley* with its thirty-two, and the *York* with its forty-eight have best survived the ravages of time. In the many towns where the trade guilds had full charge of presenting the Miracle dramas, the plays were distributed among the various guilds, each guild being made responsible for the staging, financing, and acting of its particular play. Consideration was given to the special aptitudes of each guild. For example, the performance of the Noah's Ark scene was entrusted to the shipwrights, the Three Wise Men episode to the jewelers, the Last Supper to the bakers, and the Crucifixion to the butchers.

The guilds developed their own unique methods of performing these plays before the public. Each guild fitted out a stage on wheels, not unlike our "float," equipped with two stories, the upper for the stage proper and the lower for a dressing-room. In some cases, as in *The Second Shepherd's Play*, these stage-wagons must have been twenty or more feet in length. Early on *Corpus Christi Day*, the festival instituted by Pope Urban IV in 1264, and falling on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, these stage-wagons were drawn up in order. The guild which acted the Creation scene would begin, possibly in front of the church, and after its performance would move its stage to the second

station designated beforehand as a stopping place. Thus in the course of several hours ten or more plays might be going on simultaneously at various stations in the town. For all the scenes to pass a given point in the town often required as many as three or more days, depending upon the number of plays in the cycle and the size of the town. These actors, though strictly amateurs, were often paid for their artistic services. In one instance a certain man was given three shillings four pence for playing God. Another received four pence for hanging Judas, and still another the same amount for crowing like a cock.

The keen competition among the various guilds induced many guild poets to introduce new scenes into their plays in order to impress the spectators. Comic scenes were inserted in such notable plays as *The Deluge* from the Chester cycle, and *The Second Shepherd's Play*. In the various Abraham and Isaac plays elements of pathos were introduced to stir more deeply the emotion of the audience. Accordingly, in these early Miracle plays we may notice the beginnings of comedy and tragedy.

Among the preserved Miracle plays, *Abraham's Sacrifice* from the Brome cycle and *The Second Shepherd's Play* from the Towneley cycle are considered the best from the standpoint of literary art. The first of these plays dates from about 1470. The simple grandeur and the sheer unaffectedness with which the poet in this instance called up the salient Scriptural episodes is a tribute both to his technical skill and the fervent spirit that moved him at the time of writing. The following example of the verse used in this play is taken from lines 269-290, which present Abraham and Isaac in dialogue as the latter is about to be offered upon the altar:

ABRAHAM. Al dere chyld, lefe of thy monys;
In all thy lyffe thow grevyd me neuer onys.
Now blyssyd be thow, body and bonys,
That euer thow were bred and born!
Thow hast be to me chyld full good.
But i-wysse, child, thow I morne neuer so fast,
Yit must I nedes here at the last
In thys place sched all thy blood.
Ther-for, my dere son, here schall thou lye.

[Places him on the altar.]

On-to my warke I must me stede.

I-wysse I had as leve my-selffe to dey,

Yff God wyll be plecyd wyth my dede,

And myn owyn body for to offer.

YSAAC. A! mercy, fader, morne ye no more!

Yowr wepyng maketh my hart sore,

As my owyn deth that I schall suffer.

Yowr kerche, fader, a-bowt my eyn ye wynd.

ABRAHAM. So I schall, my swettest chyld in erde.

YSAAC. Now yit, good fader, haue thys in mynd,

And smyth me not oftyn with yowr scharp swerd,

But hastely that yt be sped.

The iambic four-stress line is apparent. *The Second Shepherd's Play* belongs also to the latter half of the fifteenth century. In its humorous and realistic touches, its charm and freshness, the bounds of dramatic art are pushed one step further. There is more freedom in choice of incidents and greater liberty in introducing human touches. Here is evident a growing interest in a drama which sets forth English character types and customs. The English writers are learning to construct a drama and are training their audiences to follow the story with but a meager stage equipment. These Miracle plays flourished well into the sixteenth century.

The Passion Play, enacted every ten years at Oberammergau, Bavaria, has striking resemblances to the Miracle plays, and in a unique way links these medieval plays with modern drama. The history of this play challenges our admiration. In 1633, while a plague was sweeping the town of Oberammergau, the villagers vowed to represent in drama the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ if only the plague would be stayed. According to the legend the disease disappeared overnight as if by magic. Since these early people bound their descendants, as well as themselves, the enactment of a play at stated intervals, with certain interruptions in the nineteenth century, has been continued to our present time. The oldest text of *The Passion Play* dates from the fifteenth century to a manuscript of the Augustine Monastery of St. Ulrich. At first *The Passion Play* was produced in the village churchyard. In 1830 a small theater was built to

accommodate the increasing number of spectators. A larger theater was constructed in 1890, and a still larger one in 1930 at a cost of 1,000,000 marks. The last seats 5,500 people. Starting at eight o'clock in the morning, with an intermission of two hours at noon, the play continues until six in the evening. So famous has this play become that in 1930 around 300,000 visitors from all parts of the world witnessed the performances.

MORALITY PLAYS

We have already noted that the English Miracle plays were taken out of the church and were performed on movable stages and in the native tongue by lay actors. We have likewise observed that into these same plays, (i.e., *The Second Shepherd's Play*) were introduced humor and realism, based not upon any Bible story but drawn from contemporary life. These early English dramatic writers next developed a new type of play in which the characters were not real flesh and blood creatures but personified abstractions: Devil, Death, Pleasure, Good Deeds, Slander, Jealousy, Hypocrisy, Knowledge, Beauty, World, Flesh, etc. This form of drama attempted to reflect the eternal struggle between good and evil. This was usually accomplished by presenting the vices and virtues as contesting for the possession of the soul of a central figure who usually went by the name of *Mankind*. The obvious purpose of the Moralities was to give instruction in the conduct of life.

The dramatic progenitors of the Morality plays are to be found in the Paternoster plays, which were first mentioned in 1378, and were acted at York, Beverley, and Lincoln. *The Castle of Perseverance*, composed around 1425, is, however, the earliest of our completed Moralities in existence. For the remainder of the fifteenth century the Morality plays were at the height of their popularity. *Mankind* (c.1475), *Everyman* (before 1500), and *Wyt and Science* (c.1530) together with *The Castle of Perseverance* comprise the best that has come down to us in this form of drama. *Everyman*, the most famous of the group, still has a partial appeal for us today. It was written for a medieval society which delighted in allegorical literature and especially in the inexplicable idea of death. Though the characterization and action of *Everyman* strike us today as being very trite and obvious,

its theme nevertheless presents the enduring truth that when Death calls, the soul must go alone into the Land of the Hereafter, unattended by physical strength, worldly goods, or friends. Notice the moralizing in the following dialogue between Everyman and Good Deeds as Everyman is about to die:

EVERYMAN. Methynke, alas, that I must be gone

To make my rekenynge, and my dettes paye;

For I se my tyme is nye spent awaye.

Take example, all ye that this do here or se,

How they that I loued best do forsake me,

Excepte my Good Dedes that bydeth truely.

GOOD DEEDS. All erthly thynges is but vanyte.

Beaute, Strength, and Dyscrecyon do man forsake,

Folysshe frendes, and kynnesmen, that fayre spake,—

All fleeth saue Good Dedes, and that am I.

EVERYMAN. Haue mercy on me, God moost myghty,

And stande by me, thou moder and mayde, Holy Mary!

GOOD DEEDS. Fere not; I wyll speke for the.

Everyman has been frequently revived in the twentieth century. It was presented by the Ben Greet players in Mendelssohn Hall, New York, in 1903, and by the Norwich players on the outside of Canterbury Cathedral in England from August 19 to 24, 1929.

Although the Morality play represents a certain retrogression in the dramatic idea, it marks a step forward in several other respects. New figures were created. It opened up greater opportunities for the exercise of inventive skill. A wider range of subjects was also made possible: the Bible, the Apocrypha, and the Saints' legends no longer dictated what the characters and action should be. Above all, the struggle that goes on in man's soul was depicted on the stage for the first time, preparing the way for the later glory of such profound creations as *Hamlet*.

INTERLUDES

By the close of the fifteenth century the English drama had progressed to the rather artless Mystery and Morality plays. The drama was still didactic. The professional actor had not yet made his appearance. In England there were still no theaters nor any professional playwrights. During the sixteenth century which

followed, the drama made unusual strides forward. The first development in the process of dramatic evolution to attract our attention in the new century is the *Interlude*. The English audience of the preceding century had approved the inclusion of comic parts in certain Miracle and Morality plays. Here then in the Interlude the author acted upon this suggestion and invented something wholly designed for entertainment and amusement. Whether it was used to enliven the duller moments of an older miracle or morality play, or to accompany a festal occasion in some nobleman's hall does not matter very much. What we need to remember is that the Interlude was generally of a comic nature and that it freed itself from the Scriptural Miracles and from the didactic Moralities. It drew its characters from current social types. Realistic it was, and frequently satirical. Often the slight plot turned on some humorous situation. Native wit was woven into the lines to give sparkle and pungency to the acting.

John Heywood, who was attached to the court of Henry VIII, was the leading writer of Interludes. Among the many attributed to him, *The Four P.P.* is his best. In this skit a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Peddler, and a Potycary get into a dispute as to which of them can tell the biggest lie. The Palmer wins with the presumably preposterous assertion that of five thousand women whom he has seen,

Yet in all places where I haue ben,
Of all the women that I haue sene,
I neuer sawe, nor knewe, in my consyens,
Any one woman out of paciens.

COMEDIES

Up to the time of the Interlude, Greek and Roman plays had not yet influenced English drama. The latter had developed uninterruptedly from the church ritual. The comedies of Plautus were discovered in 1427; but it was not until the opening years of the new century that Englishmen began to read not only Plautus but Terence and Seneca as well. With a study of the Roman drama came an incorporation of its technique into native plays. At first the students at colleges and at the more important

Grammar Schools enacted the original Roman dramas before select audiences. As early as 1520, according to Holinshed, a comedy of Plautus was enacted before Henry VIII. It was not however until between 1534 and 1541 that Nicholas Udall, then Master of Eton, wrote what is generally acclaimed as the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, prepared in all probability for his own Eton boys to enact. It is the first known secular drama in which the threads of the story are consciously tied and untied with a view to unifying, sustaining, and heightening the plot action. Udall's play made an important contribution to the development of English drama. In theme and technique it borrowed heavily from Latin comedy; but native elements were not lacking in matters of dialect, characterization, and humor. It introduced a carefully constructed longer play. Acts and scenes were employed for the first time to indicate lapses of time. Udall showed how the interest of the audience could not only be sustained but could be focused more and more intently until the moment of climax was reached. *Ralph Roister Doister* also aided in making clear to the English writer the difference between comedy and tragedy. At last Latin comedy had entered England and had enlarged the Interlude into a full grown play. In the next comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, written about 1554, and acted at Christ's College, Cambridge, the technique of the Roman comedy was further adapted to English life and character types.

TRAGEDIES

A little more than a decade after the first comedy appeared before an English audience, the bloody *Gorboduc; or, Ferrex and Porrex*, by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, was performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1561 for the purpose of impressing upon the young Queen the dangers attendant upon an unsettled succession. It was modeled after Seneca. For us today the play offers little by way of real enjoyment; but it is the earliest English play in blank verse:

When fathers cease to know that they should rule,
The children cease to know they should obey;
And often ouerkindly tendernessee
Is mother of vnkindly stubbornnessee.

This but forestalls the matchless blank verse which was shortly to grace the plays of Shakespeare. Following *Gorboduc*, one of the most noteworthy tragedies is that of Thomas Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587), presented, like its predecessor, before Queen Elizabeth, and, like it, written in blank verse.

CHRONICLE PLAYS

The chronicle plays came in response to the Englishman's growing interest in the past of his own country. Even before Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, England had entered upon a period of unparalleled discovery. The national imagination was awakening. Englishmen were rapidly becoming self-conscious. Life to them was full of enjoyment and romance. Patriotism ran at high pitch, especially after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Germes of the chronicle play are apparent in Bishop Bale's *Kynge Johan* (produced in 1538) and in the tragedy, *Gorboduc* (1561). The chronicle play which first presented a subject taken from the actual history of England is Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius Tragedia* (1579); but this was written in Latin. The earliest chronicle dramas which employed both the vernacular and native historical subjects were in circulation by 1595, chief among them *The Troublesome Reign of King John* and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. From this time forward this type of play became prominent, especially so in the hands of Marlowe, Peele, and Shakespeare.

LATER ENGLISH DRAMA

From the time of Queen Elizabeth's ascension to the throne in 1558 to the closing of the theaters in 1642 England witnessed an incomparable dramatic activity. During the reigns of Elizabeth and her successor, James I, England passed through a period of comparative peace. Prosperity, national unity, and the rise of the great middle class were largely responsible for this era of good feeling. This fact is important in so far as drama flourishes best when people have the means and the time to attend dramatic performances. Between 1575 and 1600 no less than six theaters were built in the environs of London. They were modeled on

the Elizabethan inn-yards, inclining toward the circular or hexagonal in shape, a roof being provided only for the tiers of galleries that extended along the interior of the walls. The seating capacity varied, it seems, from about 500 to 1500. Here would assemble "dudes," tradesmen, gentlemen, and groundlings to watch Edward Alleyn, Richard Burbage, and other actors perform the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Up to the time of John Lyly (1554?-1606) poetry was the accepted medium of dramatic expression. With Lyly prose gradually crept into English plays; but poetry continued to be the dominant dramatic language during the greatest dramatic period in all English literature, namely the Elizabethan Age, which boasts of the immortal trio, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson.

Shakespeare is not the isolated genius that he is often imagined to be. The intellectual riches of the Renaissance were at his disposal. All the contributions to the drama that were made from *Quem Quaeritis* to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* were his for the using. In a unique but very real sense, he was the heir of that which preceded him. Especially indebted was he to Lyly, Peele, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe. While Lyly's dramas were written in a sort of euphuistic prose, he revealed the possibilities of the occasional lyric, and of prose as a suitable medium of comedy. George Peele's (1158?-1597?) *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* and other plays helped to improve and refine versification. George Greene (1558?-1592) demonstrated the possibility of injecting genuine comedy into serious plays. Thomas Kyd (1558?-1594) in his *The Spanish Tragedy* paved the way for the tragedy of blood, such as that to be found in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors, infused into his blank verse such eloquence, beauty, and imaginative power as to fix it definitely as the medium of subsequent Elizabethan dramas. He linked poetry so closely with drama that it became an integral part of it. Great drama, with Marlowe, was more than mere story telling; it became the battle ground of the will and of the emotions. No one can read his *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Dr. Faustus*, or *The Jew of Malta* without feeling that Shakespeare is but a step removed.

When Shakespeare enters, therefore, all seems in readiness. He had at his disposal various translations, such as North's *Plutarch's*

Lives, to which he might go for plots. He could turn his genius into various channels, to the chronicle play in *Richard III*, to love tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet*, to fancy and humor in *As You Like It*, to the supernatural in *The Tempest*, or to a tragedy of blood and revenge in *Macbeth*. Poetry of a brilliant order is the very essence of such plays as *Romeo and Juliet*. The atmosphere of lofty poetry especially pervades *King Lear* and the *Merchant of Venice*. With what ease he employed the various verse forms in *The Tempest*! His use of blank verse varied naturally with different plays. According to Neilson and Thorndike, at one extreme lies *Richard III* with 3374 lines of blank verse out of a total of 3599, while at the other end is *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with but 227 lines of blank verse in 3018. The kings, princes, ladies, lords, generals, heroes, and heroines that move through his plays converse chiefly in blank verse.

We are baffled when we try to account for Shakespeare's pre-eminence in drama. Granting that he came at an opportune time, so did hundreds of others. The fact remains that his was a rare poetic gift. He saw into the human heart and understood the motives which actuate it. His characters are even now to us more lifelike than the real historical characters of the period. There was almost a perfect balance between Shakespeare the craftsman and Shakespeare the delineator of life. His genius created a drama that was real, personal, and glowing with human warmth. If we but read him deeply, Shakespeare leads us to truth, to beauty, and ultimately to God Himself.

As a master of the various resources of the dramatic instrument and as an explorer in the region of man's mind and spirit:

factor in shaping the subsequent Restoration drama. It should be added that Jonson was chiefly responsible for developing the Masque, a form which later Milton employed in *Comus*.

Poetic drama continued to be written by such successors as John Marston, Thomas Dekker, John Fletcher, Thomas Heywood, John Webster, and James Shirley. The tendency of later dramatists was to follow the suggestion of Beaumont and Fletcher, namely that of approximating the daily speech in the verse form which they used. There was also a growing tendency to make the plays more sensational and melodramatic. Minor dramatists, rather than those mentioned, were chiefly responsible for vitiating the drama—if a dramatist can be held accountable

encies already existing prior to the closing of the theaters in 1642. The drama of Charles II, therefore, is basically the legitimate son of that of Charles I.

Certain changes in the Restoration theater affected the plays of the new period. The theater was now a closed building, more luxurious than before. Painted scenery and more elaborate costumes were introduced. The proscenium, or the stage between the curtain and the orchestra, shrank considerably. There was still no such thing as reserved seats. The spectators sat upon benches. With Davenant's production of *The Siege of Rhodes* in 1656, instead of boys playing women's parts, as previously, women actors were introduced upon the stage. This innovation is important in that more parts were henceforth to be written for women, and more expressly for them. This brought into the drama a stronger feminine element and resulted in the introduction of a so-called "sex appeal" hitherto unknown on the stage.

There were various types of dramatic literature produced during the Restoration era: operas, masques, heroic plays, tragedies, and comedies of manners. Since the comedies were written in prose, we shall not include them in our discussion. Of the remaining forms, the heroic plays and the tragedies particularly call for a brief consideration here.

The heroic drama which Davenant heralded in *The Siege of Rhodes* was taken up by at least four writers, chief among them John Dryden. In this type of play the chief conflict is between love and honor. The scenes are far removed from contemporary life. The characters are of high rank. In the hero we find a superlatively courageous superman, blameless, egotistic, and gloriously triumphant in love and war. The heroine is equally noble and angelic. The heroic play abounds in action, in grand spectacle, rhetoric, and metaphor. About it there is a knightly poise and a kingly sweep. The meter used is that of the heroic couplet, illustrated in the following lines from Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe*:

But as the sun when he from noon declines,
And, with abated heat, less fiercely shines,
Seems to grow milder as he goes away,
Pleasing himself with the remains of day;
So he who, in his youth, for glory strove,
Would recompense his age with ease and love.

As might be expected, such a form of drama could not long remain popular because of its tendency to overdo. The most important examples of heroic plays, in addition to *The Siege of Rhodes* and *Aureng-Zebe*, are Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada* and *The Indian Emperor*. All of these are vigorous, but often melodramatic and bombastic. The rhymed couplet was somehow ill suited for the English stage.

It was easy to go from heroic drama to Restoration tragedy. Dryden, beginning to question the suitability of the heroic couplet, brought out a tragedy in blank verse, *All for Love* (1678), modeled on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. This is his tragic masterpiece. Two other writers, namely Nathaniel Lee (1653?-1692) and Thomas Otway (1652-1685), wrote poetic dramas in the Restoration period. The first of these is remembered chiefly for *The Rival Queens*, a tragedy in blank verse. While marked by extravagance, rant, and melodrama, it is well adapted for acting. Otway's *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* are likewise tragedies in blank verse. The latter is an excellent example of Restoration tragedy and, despite its inferior poetry, held the interest of the stage for more than a hundred and fifty years. The reason is not far to seek. It is a tragedy of friendship, bitter and pathetic. The action in Act IV reaches a high point and sweeps the reader on to the close by a series of heart-rending episodes.

In the eighteenth century the stage and theater continued much the same as in the Restoration. The opera still remained a rival of the legitimate theater, and at times threatened to eclipse it. The immoral comedy of the Restoration had almost spent itself; and the reaction took the direction of sentimentalism. Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Profaneness of the English Stage* helped to turn the tide into new channels. One of the new developments in the eighteenth century was the revival of interest in Shakespeare. Nicholas Rowe in 1709-14, Alexander Pope in 1723-25, Lewis Theobald in 1688-1744, and Samuel Johnson in 1765 are the most important of those who published editions of Shakespeare's works. This renewed interest in Elizabethan dramas was especially reflected in the tragedies that were written during this century.

As in the Restoration period, the best poetic plays in the eighteenth century were tragedies in blank verse. Joseph Addison's *Cato* takes its plot from Plutarch. The verse is dignified

but cold. There is an appeal to the reason, but not to the heart. As we read, we are impressed with the lifelessness of the characters; and yet it was acted thirty-five times in London to crowded houses. Nicholas Rowe, Shakespearean critic and editor, used the subject matter of Shakespeare's *Richard III* as a basis for his best play, *The Tragedy of Jane Shore*. If we admit parody into our consideration, we shall have to mention Henry Fielding's burlesque on heroic plays, *Tom Thumb the Great*, in which he more particularly assails Dryden and Lee. John Home's tragedy, *Douglas*, was first produced in Edinburgh in 1756. It has a gripping story and is all the more powerful for its simplicity. Its position as a connecting link between eighteenth century tragedy and nineteenth century drama is particularly noteworthy.

During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Romanticism held sway in the realm of poetry. The Romantic poets were generally lacking in dramatic temperament and in first hand knowledge of the theater. Since the day of the Restoration comedy, prose was gradually gaining in favor as the most natural and effective medium for speech on the stage. The success of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777) did much, also, in turning the dramatist of the future toward prose rather than poetry. Despite this fact, the opening years of the nineteenth century witnessed a fresh appreciation of the Elizabethan drama. Charles Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (1808) and William Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817) and *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1820) are suggestive of the renewed interest in Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It is but natural that a number of poets of the period should have tried to carry on the Shakespearean tradition in the field of poetic drama. Wordsworth attempted drama in *The Borderers*, Scott in *Halidon Hill* and *Macduff's Cross*, Coleridge in *Osorio*, Southey in *Wat Tyler*, Landor in *Count Julian*, Byron in *Manfred*, Shelley in *The Cenci*, and Keats in *Otho the Great*. Most of these are so-called *closet dramas*, to be read rather than to be acted. Shelley's tragedy, *The Cenci*, is the work of a master poet, echoing the superb lines of Shakespeare but neglectful of the dramatic structure which made his plays, in addition, successful on the stage. *The Cenci* fails to unite poetry with dramatic technique. The same might be said of Byron's *Manfred*, Marino

Faliero, *The Two Foscari*, and *Werner*. Although the first is the most representative production, *Werner* is the only one that met with success on the stage. In many of Byron's plays the narrative element is more pronounced than the dramatic.

In addition to these notable poets, two other writers in the early years of the century contributed poetic dramas, namely James Sheridan Knowles and Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Knowles is best remembered for *Virginus* (1820), a tragedy. Poetry and prose are used alternately. While the play is marked by a certain rhetorical vigor and action-provoking dialogue, its great success on the stage was due not so much to the poetic merits of the play itself, which are slight indeed, as to the superior acting of Macready. The second of these men, Bulwer-Lytton, is equally interesting as a personality in the nineteenth century social and the political life, and as the author of such plays as *Richelieu; or, The Conspiracy* and *The Lady of Lyons*.

The two greatest poets of the century, Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson, were destined to experiment with drama. Although Browning was the younger man, he was the first of the two to write dramas. Beginning in 1837 with *Strafford*, he continued to write plays for the next ten years. Browning was inherently fitted for dramatic work. He possessed a certain imaginative quality. The characters that came under his scrutiny usually yielded their many-sided nature. He could bring about an interplay of emotion, and was quick to sense effective situations. But Browning's mind worked too quickly. It flitted from point to point with too great alacrity, failing often to provide sufficient transitional matter for the audience to follow. Obscurity was frequently the result. Like his Romantic predecessors, he also lacked sufficient knowledge of stage-craft. He wrote great poetry, but not great drama. From the standpoint of the theater, therefore, he was not a successful dramatist. Like Shakespeare, Browning inserted here and there lyrical pieces, some of which, as in Act 1, scene 3 in *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, are worthy of a high place. Of the various poetic dramas that Browning wrote, this one is considered the best. Its situations are more compelling and its dialogue more provocative of action and conflict.

Instead of trying his hand in drama early in life, as did Browning, Tennyson waited until he was sixty-six years of age before printing his first poetic drama, *Queen Mary*. It was the actor,

Henry Irving, who induced Tennyson to write dramas. Constitutionally, he was less equipped in dramatic instinct for the task than was Browning; but, strange to say, he was more successful. Of the seven plays he wrote, all but one, *Harold*, were produced on the stage. One of them, *The Foresters*, was given at Daly's Theatre, New York, in the same year that Tennyson died. *The Promise of May* ran for five weeks at the Globe Theatre, *The Falcon* continued for sixty-seven nights at St. James Theatre, and *The Cup* had the good fortune of holding the stage for one hundred and thirty nights. Tennyson was a student of Elizabethan drama. He conceived the idea that he might write on certain themes not touched by the eminent Elizabethans. We find him, for example, in *Becket* depicting the old struggle between the Church and Crown; and in *Harold* presenting the early conflict between the Danes, Saxons, and Normans for supremacy. The first of these is Tennyson's greatest play. It was produced by Irving in 1891 at a cost of £4,723. 11s. 2d. Its spectacular appeal and the superior acting of Irving account for the one hundred and twelve performances which were given the play at the Lyceum.

There are still four other notable figures which merit our passing consideration. Algernon Charles Swinburne wrote strictly closet dramas in such instances as *The Queen Mother*, *Rosamond*, *Atalanta in Calydon*, and *Chastelard*. Thomas Hardy contributed the epical drama, *The Dynasts*. William Butler Yeats created such fascinating plays as *The Land of Heart's Desire*, *Countess Cathleen*, *Deirdre*, and *The King's Threshold*. The plays of Stephen Phillips, like those of Yeats, came at the turn of the century. High musical and lyric qualities characterize such of his poetic pieces as *Paolo and Francesca*, *Herod*, *Ulysses*, and *Nero*. A consideration of subsequent English poetic dramatists would include such names as Robert Bridges, Lawrence Binyon, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, Conyns Carr, Rudolph Besier, Lawrence Housman, John Masefield, Israel Zangwill, Lasceles Abercrombie, and Gordon Bottomley.

CHARACTERISTICS

The art of the dramatist is not entirely within the domain of literature. In its fullest sense the drama calls for a collaboration

of the historian, actor, musician, painter, sculptor, dancer, architect, producer, audience, and author. The one indisputable test of a drama is its production upon the stage before a group of people.

In order to appreciate genuinely any art it is necessary to bear in mind some of the principles which underlie its manifestations. Drama as an art is quite complicated. To succeed it must embody more elements than any other form of literary art. The subject chosen must be important and of general interest. It must be so presented as to show an irresistible forward movement and, at the same time, to set before the audience the most essential scenes. The author must people his play with interesting characters. These he must place into appropriate surroundings and invent suitable occasions to bring them together. What he has to say must be compressed within the compass of a few hours; and so ordered should be his dialogue as to make it easy for the audience to follow. What is said, is said; there is no turning back.

There are several fundamental rules which every successful dramatist must always observe. From the very beginning the audience must know what it is all about. As soon as the introductory information is furnished, the interest of the audience must be aroused by inserting elements of expectancy, foreshadowing, and suspense. The spectators must be admitted into every secret and must never be misinformed. All irrelevant matters must be eliminated in the interest of brevity and unity of plot. The incidents must have probability. The motives behind the various acts of human beings should be clearly revealed and should be adequate to account for the given action. The whole play must be reasonable, logically coherent, swift in movement, and cumulative in intensity as it unfolds the successive stages toward the experience of an intense moment which we often call the climax. The drama is primarily interested in representing the supreme moments of life; for it is in rendering this kind of experience that the verities of life are best compressed within the limits of a dramatic production. Drama gives bodily form to human experience. Through the speech and action of visible characters it presents clearly and directly that which is unseen in the world of inward experiences. It does this without becoming involved in too fine a contemplative spirit or in a too well defined ethical distinction.

In every compelling drama the characters must act in accordance with the dictates of their own free will. The exercise of this will is the mainspring of the action. Without the assertion of this human will against opposing forces there could be no vital drama. Having determined what he wants, the central character or characters must pursue it unyieldingly. The presentation of this will in action constitutes the very heart of drama; and the dramatist does well in depicting those scenes which show contending wills in the act of struggle. In the best plays, the contest is not between bad people and good people but between two opinions.

The technique of the drama is made more difficult than that of other forms of literature because the dramatist must take into account the theater in which his play is to be enacted, the audience before whom the play is going to be given, and the actors who are to perform the various parts in the play. To a large extent the size of the theater, the seeing possibilities, and the general equipment influence the construction of plays. An author would construct a far different play for the huge outdoor theater of Dionysus at Athens than for the first small English theater in Holywell Lane with its pit and galleries. Shakespeare would not have written *Antony and Cleopatra* with its forty-two scenes for the modern theater with its heavy properties, elaborate scenery, electric lights, and drop curtain. Shakespeare by his poetic art teased his audience into imagining the necessary scenery. He could therefore fill his plays with as many scenes as his fancy and consummate art required. In our day the conditions of performance are practically the same throughout the world.

In the next place, the audience has always exerted the strongest influence upon the content of the drama. John Dryden rightly said:

They who have best succeeded on the stage
Have still conformed their genius to the age.

Samuel Johnson expressed the same idea more poignantly:

The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
And we who live to please, must please to live.

If an author would please the people, he must understand their prejudices and opinions. He may not embrace too fondly that

isolation which the lyric poet may enjoy to his heart's content. The drama is a strictly democratic art; and he who would succeed in it must have a feeling for that common humanity which will assemble to witness his production. Audiences of course vary greatly with different periods and in different locations; but in characteristics there is a noticeable similarity. The playwright must remember that his audience is chiefly interested in people—in emotion and action rather than in subtle or intellectual distinctions. The audience is more credulous and more emotional than the individual reader. What interests readers as a group are subjects reflecting the broad and elemental feelings of mankind, like hate, love, sorrow, fear, death, etc.

Playwrights have often so rendered their dramatic characterization as to conform to the "acting" skill of the actor. Some of the world's greatest dramatic poets have written parts for certain actors of their own time. This is true of the Greek tragic dramatist Sophocles, and of Shakespeare. Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Falstaff's page in *Henry IV* and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Maria in *Twelfth Night*, the Player Queen in *Hamlet*, Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale*, and Ariel in *The Tempest* were probably all intended for one and the same boy in Shakespeare's company. Shakespeare likewise wrote leading parts in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth* for Richard Burbage. Henry Arthur Jones wrote for Sir Charles Wyndham, and Sardou for Sarah Bernhardt. In this connection it is essential to observe that whether a dramatist construct his play for a living actor or not, he must ever be mindful of the limitations of actors. In this, Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and O'Neill could rely upon their own experience as actors.

After a playwright has duly considered the conditions under which the play will be produced, and has clearly in mind the audience and actors, he must see to it that the plot which he selects is developed in the most effective manner. Gazzzi was of the opinion that there were only thirty-six possible situations. If this is true, the excellency of a play depends not so much upon the story itself as upon the manner in which it is unfolded. The struggle which the play enacts must be enriched by character delineation. There is no place for extravagant or arbitrary action. Rather must the plot have upon it the stamp of inevitability as in

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The audience must be led to identify itself imaginatively with some character or characters and thus undergo with them some struggle; for the essence of drama is the "contest" or the "conflict" involved, whether it be between two impulses in the same individual, between two different individuals, or between an individual and some exterior force in the form of an institution, a convention, or public sentiment.

In every play the dramatist conforms to several well defined steps in the unfolding of the plot. First, there is the *exposition*, which imparts the information that the audience must have in order to follow the play intelligently. The atmosphere, background, situations, and leading characters are here supplied in as interesting a manner as the writer can devise. Second, some *complicating force* is introduced which will precipitate conflict and start the action toward some crisis. Third, after the action has ascended to its highest point, there comes a *turning point*, whereupon the action begins to fall and the complications start to be unraveled. Fourth, every play has a *conclusion*, which brings the play appropriately to an end by making the characters and conditions conform naturally and logically to the needs of the plot.

When we examine the masterpieces of dramatic literature, we are led to conclude that a dramatist survives not only because of a good story but more directly because of his ability to people his plays with living characters that persist in the memory of the spectators. To achieve this within the short compass of a play requires on the part of the writer a vigorous imagination and a deep understanding of human nature, especially when we remember that the dramatist is restricted in his character portrayal by what the character himself does, what he says, and what others say about him. When we consider the large number of real men and women in each of Shakespeare's plays, we are the more amazed at his power of projecting living personalities. It is the difference in characterization that lifts his *Hamlet* far above his own *Titus Andronicus*. Whether the characters in a play survive or not depends upon the dialogue. Good dramatic dialogue gives meaning to the action and appeals mightily to the feelings of the spectators. It must be compact, direct, and clear, and at the same time colorful, differentiating, and charming.

CLASSES

Comedy is the most popular of all the dramatic forms. Comedy seeks to arouse mirth by exposing the peculiarities, vanities, follies, vices, and other imperfections of life. It amuses and entertains by revealing the many little incongruities in human society. Austin Dobson characterizes comedy thus:

It lashes the vicious, it laughs at the fool,
And it brings all the prigs and pretenders to school.

Its thrust, like a rapier's, though cutting, is clean,
And it pricks affectation all over the scene.

Its mission is neither to praise nor to blame;
Its weapon is ridicule; folly, its game.

However, while the spectators are laughing at these departures from the normal, their attention is directed to those conditions in individual conduct which need correcting. The individual is thus often laughing at himself, although at the time unconsciously. In so far as comedy brings on later reformatory reflection, it is really serious. In comedy the leading characters may violate their own consciences and the laws of society; but their misdeeds are not so serious as to prevent them from repenting and conforming to the good. Harmony is again restored, and the play ends happily.

Examples of notable poetic comedies would include such plays as Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

Tragedy appeals more to the feelings than does comedy. In tragedy a human will is engaged in asserting itself against a force which does not yield. As a result the tragic hero must die. The simplest collision is that between an individual and some exterior force; the most complex, that where the will is at war with itself, divided between two opinions. The circumstances which bring on the hero's death rise out of some sin or sins that he has committed. These sins are of so serious a nature that life must be forfeited. Shakespeare's tragic heroes usually go down to disaster as a result of some defect in their own char-

acters. In Shakespeare's tragedies, as well as in those of the Greeks, the hero meets his fate heroically. In many of the modern tragedies he goes down in a fit of despair as he finally succumbs to the injustices of some social laws or strives futilely against some inherited weakness. In any case the audience should feel that the tragic end was inevitable and could not possibly have been avoided. As the contentions in life are infinite in variety, the dramatists need never despair of finding some new tragic note to sound.

A roll call of some of our greatest poetic tragedies would include Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*; Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*; Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*; Dryden's *All for Love*; Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*; Home's *Douglas*; and Gilbert's *Pygmalion and Galatea*.

The *chronicle play* is a section of history presented dramatically. Since it is based upon historical facts, the playwright is obliged to follow, in the main, the incidents as they actually occurred. The sequence of events is therefore already prescribed for the poet, leaving little room for originality in plot manipulation. For this reason the chronicle play is not so interesting as either comedy or tragedy. Although the dramatist chooses an engaging period of history, he cannot weld this historical mass together into one climactic whole as he can a subject of his own developing. All chronicle plays are greatly compressed; episodes are brought more closely together. New characters are often created, and additional scenes introduced where necessary, care being exercised not to disturb the general historical facts. With all that a master dramatist like Shakespeare could do, the story in the chronicle play is not ordered by fate as in tragedy, where the central figure, having unswervingly followed the dictates of his will, stands boldly forth to await the decree of Destiny. Our greatest poetic chronicle plays in English are the ten historical plays of Shakespeare: *Henry VI* trilogy, *Richard III*, *Richard II*, etc. In addition to these, other subsequent attempts in this form would include Bulwer-Lytton's *Richelieu*, Tennyson's *Queen Mary* and *Becket*, Stephen Phillips' *Ulysses*, and Percy MacKaye's *Jeanne d'Arc*.

In the *melodrama* we have a highly sensational or romantic play with a happy ending. The term melodrama was at first used to designate a form of dramatic musical composition in

which the spoken words and action were accompanied by music, but in which there was no singing. In time music disappeared. The swiftly moving events are governed more by chance than in serious drama. Melodrama delights in startling situations. The characters have a tendency to merge into mere puppets, being moved about as the plot situations decree. A large number of plays contain melodramatic portions, as does Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*.

Masques were perfected in the first half of the seventeenth century. Their major appeal is made through spectacle, dancing, music, and dramatic action. With the exception of Jonson and Milton, the writers of masques made no attempt to give the words literary flavor. The pageants of modern times have much in common with the masques of the seventeenth century. Generally speaking, the masque employs hidden identity and disguise as its dominating feature. The characters are allegorical, and the supernatural usually plays an important part. In the days of James I the masque was a pastime for royalty. Because of the elaborate costuming and gorgeous setting, we read of *The Triumph of Peace* costing a certain nobleman in 1634 the sum of £21,000. Ben Jonson is the most prolific writer of masques in English literature. *The Masque of Queens*, *Oberon*, and *The Golden Age Restored* are his most memorable productions. From the standpoint of literary values, Milton's *Comus* occupies the highest place. In our day many cities have resorted to the masque as a means of celebrating some historical event. New York City in 1916 very elaborately celebrated the Shakespearean Tercentenary with a mask written by Percy MacKaye, called *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*.

The *dramatic monologue* has always presented a problem to the student of the drama. It is, in a sense, more lyrical than dramatic; for it does not lend itself to stage enactment. It is dramatic only in so far as one speaker is capable, by a soliloquizing procedure, of revealing his soul and the motives which actuated him in certain important situations. The one important author of this class of poetry is Robert Browning, whose dramatic instincts fitted him admirably for presenting crises in individual characters. *My Last Duchess*, *Saul*, *Andrea del Sarto*, and *Abt Vogler* remain unchallenged in the field of the dramatic monologue.

QUESTIONS

The following books afford excellent examples of poetic dramas:

Hubbell and Beaty: *An Introduction to Drama*

Joseph Quincy Adams: *Chief Shakespearean Dramas*

William Allan Neilson: *The Chief Elizabethan Dramatists*

David Harrison Stevens: *Types of English Drama*

1. Read Heywood's *The Four P.P.* In what respects does its humor differ from that of modern plays?
2. Compare the character of King David in Peele's *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* with that presented in I and II Samuel in the Bible.
3. What pictures of the Jew do we get in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*?
4. What elements of weakness and strength do you find in Jaffier in Otway's *Venice Preserved*?
5. How is the catastrophe brought about in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
6. Is Browning's *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* best when read or when acted on the stage? Present fully the reasons for your opinion.
7. Read Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Is there any reason why Edmund should have become a villain? Make a study of Lear's Fool. Describe in your own words what to you is the most intense scene in the tragedy.
8. Milton's *Samson Agonistes* is frequently characterized as a poetic drama. What justifications within the poem itself can you find for this point of view?
9. Enumerate the dissimilarities that you find in a modern play, like Yeats' *The Land of Heart's Desire* and in an older play, like Shakespeare's *Othello*.
10. What do the typical moving picture shows of our own days have in common with such a play as Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe* or John Home's *Douglas*?
11. Elaborate upon George E. Woodberry's statement that "the drama embodies life intensively."
12. The absence of theatrical scenery as we now know it affected the production of plays in Shakespeare's day. It likewise affected the playwright in the writing of the play. Read

one of Shakespeare's plays with the view of listing a number of scenes and passages that could, because of modern stage devices, be omitted today. If these were omitted, would the play suffer? If so, to what extent?

13. Discuss Horace Walpole's assertion that "the world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel."
14. Explain what Aristotle meant by the following:

Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; embellished by poetic language; through pity and fear affecting a purgation of the passions (emotions).

15. Comment fully upon the element of pathos in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*.
16. In Joseph Quincy Adams' *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*, contrast the structure of the *Quem Quaeritis* trope with *Herodes* and *The Wayfarers*. Note the changes that have taken place.
17. Explain in greater detail A. W. Ward's following statement:

A dramatic character must therefore, whatever its part in the action, be sufficiently marked by features of its own to interest the imagination; with these features its subsequent conduct must be consistent, and to them its participation in the action must correspond.

18. Point out the melodramatic portions in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*.
19. Write out in greater detail the ideas that Robert Louis Stevenson presents in the following:

It is sometimes supposed that the drama consists of incident. It consists of passion, which gives the actor his opportunity; and that passion must progressively increase, or the actor, as the piece proceeded, would be unable to carry the audience from a lower to a higher pitch of interest and emotion. A good serious play must therefore be founded on one of the passionate *crucies* of life, where duty and inclination come nobly to the grapple.

20. Read the following by H. N. Hudson very carefully. What do you think of Shakespeare as a moral teacher?

But Shakespeare's main peculiarity as a teacher of goodness lies in this, that he keeps our moral sympathies in the right place without discovering his own. With the one exception of Henry the Fifth, we cannot perceive, from the delineation itself, whether he takes part with the good character or the bad; nevertheless he somehow so puts the matter that we cannot help taking part with the good. For I run no risk in saying there is not a single instance in his plays where the feelings of any natural-hearted reader fail to go along with those who are, at least relatively, the best. And as he does not make nor even let us see which side he is on, so of course we are led to take the right side, not because he does, but simply because it is the right side. Thus his moral lessons and inspirations affect us as coming, not from him, but from Nature herself; and so the authority they carry is not his, good as that may be, but hers, which is infinitely better. Thus he is ever appealing directly to the tribunal of our own inward moral forces, and at the same time speaking health and light into that tribunal. There need be, there can be, no higher proof of the perfect moral sanity of his genius than this. And for right moral effect it is just the best thing we can have, and is worth a thousand times more than all the ethical arguing and voting in the world. If it be a marvel how the Poet can keep his own hand so utterly unmoved by the passion he is representing, it is surely not less admirable that he should thus, without showing any compassion himself, move our compassion in just the degree, and draw it to just the place, which the laws of moral beauty and proportion require.

EXAMPLES

Anonymous: Abraham's Sacrifice (From the Brome cycle)

The Second Shepherd's Play

Everyman

John Heywood: The Four P.P.

Nicholas Udall: Ralph Roister Doister

William Stevenson (?): Gammer Gurton's Needle

George Peele: The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe

Thomas Kyd: The Spanish Tragedy

Robert Greene: Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay

Christopher Marlowe: Tamburlaine the Great

Dr. Faustus

- The Jew of Malta
 William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream
 Romeo and Juliet
 Merchant of Venice
 Richard II
 Henry V
 As You Like It
 Twelfth Night
 Hamlet
 Othello
 King Lear
 Macbeth
 Antony and Cleopatra
 The Winter's Tale
 The Tempest
 Thomas Dekker: The Shoemaker's Holiday
 Thomas Middleton and William Rowley: The Changeling
 Ben Jonson: Sejanus, His Fall
 Volpone; or, The Fox
 The Alchemist
 John Fletcher: The Faithful Shepherdess
 John Webster: The Duchess of Malfi
 Philip Massinger: A New Way to Pay Old Debts
 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher: The Knight of the
 Burning Pestle
 Philaster; or, Love Lies A-Bleeding
 The Maid's Tragedy
 John Ford: The Broken Heart
 James Shirley: The Lady of Pleasure
 The Cardinal
 Thomas Heywood: A Woman Killed with Kindness
 Sir William Davenant: The Siege of Rhodes
 John Dryden: The Conquest of Granada
 The Indian Emperor
 Aureng-Zebe
 All for Love
 Thomas Otway: The Orphan
 Venice Preserved
 Nathaniel Lee: The Rival Queens
 Joseph Addison: Cato

Nicholas Rowe: The Tragedy of Jane Shore

Henry Fielding: Tom Thumb the Great

John Home: Douglas

James Sheridan Knowles: Virginius

George Gordon, Lord Byron: Manfred
Werner

Percy Bysshe Shelley: The Cenci

Edward Bulwer-Lytton: Richelieu or, The Conspiracy

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Harold

The Falcon

The Cup

Becket

Robert Browning: King Victor and King Charles

The Return of the Druses

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon

Algernon Charles Swinburne: Atalanta in Calydon

Thomas Hardy: The Dynasts

William Butler Yeats: The Land of Heart's Desire
Deirdre

Stephen Phillips: Paolo and Francesca

Ulysses

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